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China's AI Blueprint

China has outlined a three-step timeline for its AI development in a recently issued Central Government guideline: By 2027, the penetration rate of AI technology should reach 70 percent, with the core industries of the intelligent economy expanding rapidly; by 2030, the penetration rate should surpass 90 percent, making AI a central growth engine of the economy; and by 2035, China should have entered a mature stage of intelligent economic and social development.

The guideline, released on August 26 with a focus on deepening the implementation of the AI Plus initiative, also identifies six priority areas for integrated AI development: science and technology, industry, consumption, public welfare, governance and global cooperation.

The impact of AI on economic development, social progress and the international political and economic landscape is evolving rapidly. Strengthening the implementation of the AI Plus initiative and promoting the deep integration of AI with the economy and society are now not only urgent tasks we face today, but must also become a strategic priority for long-term development. History has taught

us that every technological revolution will bring about an exponential leap in productivity and drive profound evolutions in social structure. AI is the latest of these epoch-making, revolutionary technologies.

The AI Plus initiative aims to seize the opportunities presented by AI and ensure they are channeled into satisfying people's needs for a better quality of life. It will do so by promoting the in-depth application of AI to people's daily life, including in the healthcare, education, transportation and elderly care sectors.

To achieve these goals, the guideline proposed strengthening eight basic supporting capabilities: basic model performance, data supply innovation, computing power management, application development environment, prosperity of the open source ecosystem, talent team building, regulatory frameworks and security measures.

The essence of China's AI blueprint is to define AI as a new generation of "civilizational infrastructure." Its goal is to build symbiosis and balance between AI and technologies, organizations and society, ensuring its development adheres to the principle of "technology for good." **BR**



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XINHUA

ROUND, ROUND, THEY GO!

Locals sail around an island while circling Lugu Lake by boat in Yanyuan County, Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province, on September 16, the first Mountain and Lake Circling Festival in Liangshan.

Mountain and lake circling is an important folk custom of the Mosuo people residing near Lugu Lake. To honor this tradition, the prefecture has designated the 25th day of the seventh lunar month as the Mountain and Lake Circling Festival, granting residents of the Yanyuan and Muli counties a one-day holiday beginning this year.



Awe-Inspiring Aviation

A preview of the 2025 aviation open-day activities of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force and the Changchun Air Show in Changchun, Jilin Province, on September 16. The aviation open-day activities were officially held on September 19.

Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge

The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge had facilitated over 90 million passenger trips and handled over 18.68 million vehicles since its inauguration in October 2018, according to the bridge's border inspection station on September 16.

The crossing has drastically reduced travel time between Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Zhuhai in Guangdong Province from three hours to just 30 minutes.

The bridge has experienced robust growth in traffic, with passenger volume reaching 27 million in 2024. This year has already seen 21.2 million passengers, a 19-percent year-on-year increase. Moreover, annual trips are projected to surpass 30 million for the first time by year-end.

The expansion of individual travel plans from the Chinese mainland to Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions has significantly boosted

tourism across the bridge. Since the beginning of 2025, more than 9.01 million mainland residents have used the bridge for travel.

Trips by Hong Kong and Macao residents have already exceeded 12.7 million. Full-year projections estimate over 18 million trips.

Air Quality

Beijing on September 12 released the results of the fourth-round PM2.5 source analysis, which showed an increase in the contribution of regional transport.

PM2.5, or particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 microns or less, is often referred to as fine particulate matter or soot.

Unveiled at a Beijing forum on clean air and climate action, this round of analysis was conducted by the Beijing Municipal Ecology and Environment Bureau, the Beijing Municipal Ecological and Environmental Monitoring Center, Tsinghua University, Peking University, and

several other partner institutions.

Shen Xiu'e, head of the Beijing Municipal Ecological and Environmental Monitoring Center, noted that Beijing's air quality has continued to see improvements thanks to years of efforts.

According to the analysis results, while both regional and local areas have achieved significant emission reductions, the relative contribution of PM2.5 sources in Beijing has changed, with regional transport now accounting for 57 percent of the total, while local emissions making up 43 percent.

Compared with 2020, the proportion of regional transport has increased by more than 10 percent. In terms of local sources, mobile sources and residential emissions now account for a larger share compared to 2020.

Since 2013, the Beijing Municipal Ecology and Environment Bureau has conducted four rounds of PM2.5 source analysis studies, with the

findings of the first three rounds released in 2014, 2018 and 2021, respectively. The results of each study have helped identify key focus areas for Beijing's air pollution control at different stages, supporting the continuous improvements of its air quality.

Green Travel

The total number of registered new-energy public buses in China had reached about 544,000 units by the end of 2024, accounting for 82.7 percent of all urban public buses in the country, a transport official said on September 12.

Li Yang, Vice Minister of Transport, made the remarks at a green transport promotional event in Jinan, capital of Shandong Province in east China.

As of late 2024, the total length of urban public bus lines in operation had reached 1.75 million km, and the total mileage of urban rail transit in operation had reached approximately 11,000 km, ranking first worldwide, Li said.

Li said that at present, over 200 million people across the country are opting to use green travel methods on a daily basis. Among them, 100 million people commute by rail transit, 100 million people take public buses and 24 million people choose to ride shared bikes.

Li also called on local authorities to further improve urban public transportation services and create an environment that is more conducive to green travel.

Child Health

The rates of overweight and obesity among Chinese children under the age of 6 decreased from 10.4 percent five years ago to the current 9.7 percent, head of the National Health

Commission (NHS) Lei Haichao said on September 11.

The incidence rate of macrosomia, or large-for-gestational-age infants, has dropped for five consecutive years during the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25), Lei told a press conference.

The nutritional status of children in China has continued to improve, with the stunting rate among children under 6 years old nationwide dropping to 4.5 percent and the underweight rate decreasing to 1.4 percent, Lei added.

Medical Care Progress

China has risen to the world's second place in terms of new drug development, with domestic drugs under research accounting for over a fifth of the global total, a health official said on September 11.

In recent years, a series of innovative medicines developed by China—including some anti-cancer drugs—have been approved for market launch, filling gaps in the country's portfolio of homegrown treatments, said Guo Yanhong, deputy head of the NHS.

At a press conference on China's healthcare progress from 2021 to 2025, the official

also highlighted the country's advances in high-end medical device development.

Breakthroughs include a homegrown photon-counting CT scanner with up to triple the resolution of traditional machines, faster scans and lower radiation exposure. Domestically developed orthopedic and soft-tissue surgical robots are improving precision and reducing trauma, while ECMO machines, artificial hearts, and proton and heavy-ion therapy systems have also been independently developed and deployed in hospitals.

Engraved Stone

China's National Cultural Heritage Administration announced on September 15 that an engraved stone, discovered on the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau, is the only known Qin Dynasty (221-207 B.C.) engraved stone still preserved at its original site and the one located at the highest altitude during the historic period.

The stone is situated on the northern shore of Gyaring Lake in Maduo County, Qinghai Province, at an altitude of about 4,300 meters.

The finding is of considerable historical, artistic and scientific value, according to the administration.



Surging Sales

Clients negotiate with a sports product dealer at Yiwu International Trade City in Yiwu, Zhejiang Province, on September 15. Dubbed "the world's supermarket," Yiwu has recently witnessed a surge in orders for sports products, driven by major sporting events including the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

National Nature Reserve

The National Forestry and Grassland Administration has released the details of the Huangyan Dao National Nature Reserve according to the country's regulations on nature reserves.

The official website of China's Central Government on September 10 posted the State Council's approval of the Ministry of Natural Resources' request for the establishment of the Huangyan Dao National Nature Reserve,

agreeing to the establishment of the nature reserve.

The Huangyan Dao National Nature Reserve is located in China's southernmost island city of Sansha, Hainan Province, covering an area of 3,523.67 hectares.

Its primary conservation focus is the coral reef ecosystem, according to a statement from the administration.

The establishment of the nature reserve is an important guarantee for maintaining the diversity, stability and sustainability of Huangyan Dao's ecosystem, as stated in the State Council's approval document.



The Joys of Travel

Foreign tourists take photos at the Panlong Lake scenic area in Yuanshi County of Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province, on September 14. The 2025 Shijiazhuang International Traveler Joy Season kicked off there the previous day. The event invited guests from over 30 countries and regions to explore Shijiazhuang.

Service Consumption

Nine government departments, including the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), jointly issued a package of measures to augment service consumption on September 16. Comprising 19 items across five areas, they are part of broader efforts to spur domestic demand and unleash consumption potential.

To advance high-level opening up in the services sector, China will promote the orderly opening up of areas such as the Internet and culture—while expanding pilot programs in telecommunications, healthcare and education.

The country will encourage the introduction of international sports events and ease market access in the high-end medical services, leisure and vacation sectors. Also, restrictive measures will be further reduced to attract more foreign investment and private capital.

Meanwhile, steps will be taken to encourage more overseas visitors to spend money in China. The country will expand unilateral visa waivers in an orderly man-

ner to include more countries, improve regional visa-free entry policies, optimize visa policies for foreigners—and facilitate their communication, accommodation and payment options in China. The country will also issue five-year multiple-entry visas to more eligible persons.

In addition, China will step up credit support for consumption and offer financial subsidies regarding loan interest to service providers in areas closely related to people's daily lives—to lower their financing costs.

Consumer Spending

China's consumer spending in the first eight months of this year expanded at a solid pace, with retail sales of consumer goods growing 4.6 percent year on year to 32.39 trillion yuan (\$4.6 trillion), official data showed on September 15.

In August alone, retail sales of consumer goods rose 3.4 percent from a year earlier to nearly 3.97 trillion yuan (\$558 billion), according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

Online retail sales climbed 9.6 percent year on year to 9.98 trillion yuan (\$1.4 trillion) in the first eight months, the NBS data showed.

From January to August, retail sales of consumer goods in urban areas reached 28.11 trillion yuan (\$4 trillion), up 4.6 percent year on year, while retail sales in rural areas amounted to nearly 4.29 trillion yuan (\$603 billion), an increase of 4.7 percent year on year.

Sales of physical goods online increased 6.4 percent to nearly 8.1 trillion yuan (\$1 trillion), accounting for a quarter of total retail sales.

Among them, sales of food, clothing and daily necessities increased 15 percent, 2.4 percent and 5.7 percent, respectively, according to the NBS.

The consumer price index (CPI), a main gauge of inflation, was down 0.4 percent year on year in August, while the core CPI, which excludes food and energy prices, rose 0.9 percent, quickening from July's 0.8-percent increase. August was the

fourth consecutive month of broadened gains in the core CPI.

Auto Sales

The authorities have unveiled a two-year work plan to stabilize auto sector growth, targeting sales of approximately 32.3 million vehicles in 2025, up around 3 percent year on year.

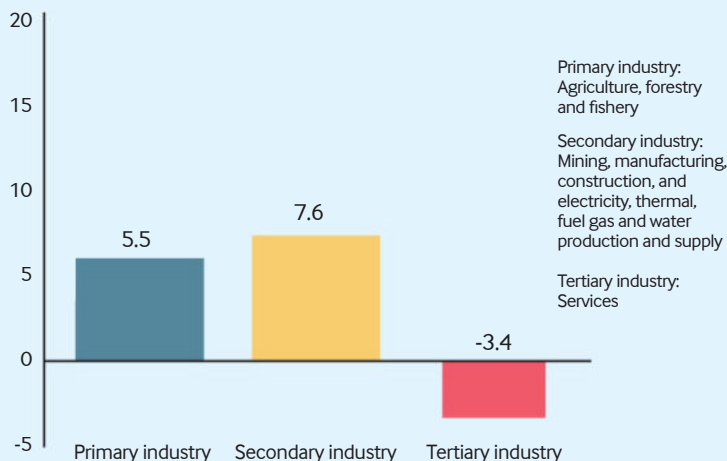
The plan, jointly issued by eight government departments, including the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, projects sales of new-energy vehicles (NEVs) to hit around 15.5 million units in 2025, a year-on-year increase of around 20 percent.

Other targets include steady growth in auto exports and a 6-percent rise in the added value of the auto manufacturing industry in 2025. By 2026, the industry is projected to sustain robust growth, with enhanced efficiency, quality and scale.

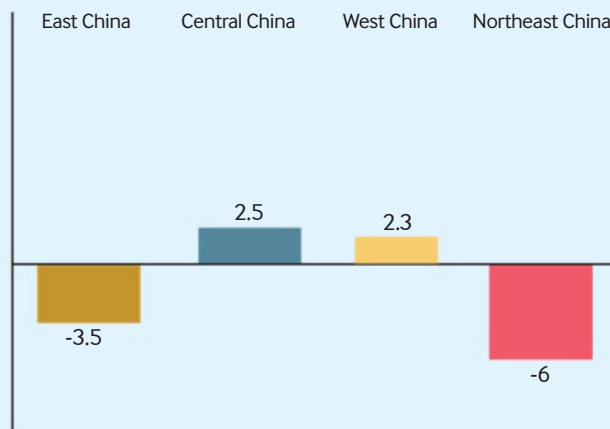
The plan outlines over 60 measures across four key areas, which include stimulating domestic demand, strengthening

NUMBERS

Fixed Assets Investment Growth by Sector
January-August (% y.o.y.)



Fixed Assets Investment Growth by Region
January-August (% y.o.y.)



supply chains, optimizing the business environment, as well as deepening opening up and cooperation.

On the demand side, the plan outlines measures to accelerate NEV market expansion and advance intelligent connected vehicle technologies. It specifies that over 700,000 additional NEVs will be deployed in sectors including public transport, taxis and logistics in 25 pilot cities.

The supply-side initiatives target technological innovation to drive consumer demand and standard upgrades to improve product quality. The plan focuses on breakthroughs in automotive chips, operating systems, AI and solid-state batteries.

To optimize the industrial ecosystem and strengthen global cooperation, the plan stresses cost surveys and price monitoring, product consistency checks, timely payments by major automakers, and orderly overseas expansion.

Digital Trade

China will further expand opening up in digital trade-related

sectors such as telecommunications, the Internet and culture, Vice Minister of Commerce Sheng Qiuping said on September 11.

China will encourage foreign investors to increase investment in the digital sector and improve the convenience of investment and operations for foreign-invested enterprises engaged in digital trade, Sheng told a press conference.

The country will promote the orderly cross-border flow of data, accelerate the formulation of standards related to digital trade, and advance the international alignment of these standards, Sheng said, adding that China will also implement its negative list for cross-border services trade and continuously raise the level of opening up in digital trade.

In building digital trade platforms, China will establish national demonstration zones for digital trade, and build clusters that feature higher-level opening up, institutional innovations, a sound business

environment and strong spillover effects.

In addition, China will nurture leading digital trade enterprises with strong innovation capacity and global competitiveness, and support them in expanding global markets, as well as foster small and medium-sized firms that are highly internationalized and possess unique competitive advantages, said Sheng.

China will play a constructive role in discussions regarding digital trade rules under the frameworks of the World Trade Organization, the Group of 20 (G20) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and work to safeguard and improve the multilateral governance system for the digital economy, Sheng noted.

R&D Intensity

The 500 largest enterprises in China posted steady increases in spending on research and development (R&D) last year, with average R&D intensity rising for an eighth consecutive year,

according to a 2025 enterprise-ranking report published by China Enterprise Confederation and China Enterprise Directors Association on September 15.

For an enterprise, R&D intensity is the ratio of a firm's R&D investment to its revenue.

According to the annual list of the top 500 Chinese enterprises, the average R&D intensity of ranked companies hit a record high of 1.95 percent in 2024.

The list was drawn based on enterprises' 2024 operating revenues, with the entry threshold for last year's ranking at 47.96 billion yuan (\$6.75 billion)—an increase of 579 million yuan (\$81.66 million) compared to the previous year.

Among the top 500 Chinese enterprises, 267 reported operating revenues exceeding 100 billion yuan (\$14 billion), accounting for 53.4 percent of companies on the list.

The combined operating revenues of these listed companies totaled 110.15 trillion yuan (\$15.53 trillion) in 2024, maintaining an established growth trend.



(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)



UNITED KINGDOM

Police control the perimeter of a crowd in London on September 13. Protesters joined the anti-immigration rally "United the Kingdom," which led to substantial police presence and violent clashes.

Multiple arrests were made



SWITZERLAND

The launch of the 2025 edition of the World Trade Report at the World Trade Organization (WTO) headquarters in Geneva on September 17. The WTO said the use of AI may boost global trade by nearly 40 percent by 2040



JAMAICA

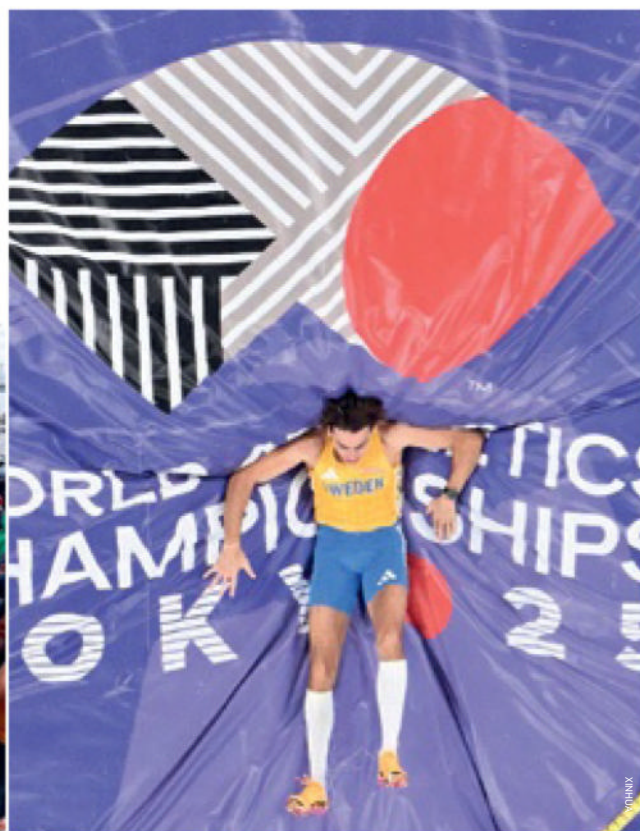
Andrew Holness (right) receives the Instrument of Appointment to Office of Prime Minister from Governor General Patrick Allen during his swearing-in ceremony in Kingston on September 16





ECUADOR

Armed forces and national police maintain order on a road in Quito on September 16. President Daniel Noboa declared a 60-day state of emergency in seven provinces on that day, citing "serious internal unrest" after transport unions went on strike over raised diesel prices



JAPAN

Armand Duplantis of Sweden competes during the men's pole vault final at the 2025 World Athletics Championships in Tokyo on September 15. He secured the gold at 6.15 meters, breaking the pole vault world record for the 14th time



MEXICO

The national flag is unfurled at an Independence Day military parade in Zocalo Square, Mexico City, on September 16



THIS WEEK PEOPLE & POINTS

↓ NEW HEAD OF THE NATIONAL ETHNIC AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Senior official **Chen Ruifeng** has recently been appointed head of the National Ethnic Affairs Commission, an agency tasked with coordinating relations between China's ethnic groups and promoting solidarity among them.

Chen, 59, has held several posts including secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) committees of Suizhou, Hubei Province, and Xining, Qinghai Province. Before this latest appointment, he was deputy head of the United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee and head of the National Religious Affairs Administration. Chen is an alternate member of the incumbent 20th CPC Central Committee.

There are 56 ethnic groups in China with the Han people making up 91 percent of the total population. The other 55 ethnic groups are collectively known as ethnic minorities.



Drawing a Line in the Street

Yangcheng Evening News
September 16

Recently, a traffic ruling in Shanghai sparked much public debate. A female cyclist, crossing a busy street outside a designated crosswalk, collided with a car that was proceeding properly. After investigation, traffic police held the cyclist fully responsible.

When her family contested the decision, arguing that “the driver should always bear some responsibility,” the officer firmly rebutted, “If everyone thought that way, how could drivers ever drive safely?” This decisive ruling and principled response won widespread praise online.

Chinese traffic enforcement has often assigned drivers partial blame—even when not at fault—to appease non-motorists, who are traditionally perceived as the “weaker” party. While perhaps well-intentioned, such rulings have blurred legal boundaries, undermined the rule of law, and perpetuated the dangerous misconception that vulnerability equates to innocence.

In this case, authorities correctly applied the “fault principle” as defined by China's Road Traffic Safety Law, which assigns liability to the party whose illegal action directly causes an accident. The overwhelming public support for this ruling underscores a deep public trust in fair and impartial enforcement. Authorities should leverage this consensus as a catalyst for advanced traffic governance.



Educating Pioneers, Not Pupils

China Newsweek
September 15

This fall semester, a new class of research-oriented Chinese universities, including Fuyao University of Technology, Greater Bay University and Shenzhen University of Advanced Technology, have become the undeniable “stars” of higher education. Fuyao University of Technology in Fuzhou, Fujian Province, for example, was initiated by Cao Dewang, Chairman

“The real history is far more brutal than what the film can depict.”

Jin Chengmin, Curator of the Exhibition Hall of Evidence of Crimes Committed by Unit 731 of the Japanese Imperial Army, at the premiere of *Evil Unbound*, a film that exposes the notorious Japanese World War II germ warfare unit's atrocities, in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, on September 17

“We urge Israel to listen to the strong concerns voiced by the international community, stop its military operations in Gaza at once, realize a full and lasting ceasefire as soon as possible, and avoid an even larger humanitarian crisis.”

Foreign Ministry spokesperson **Lin Jian**, commenting on the Israeli military's recent offensive on Gaza City, at a press briefing on September 17

of auto glass giant Fuyao Group, with a founding donation of 10 billion yuan (\$1.4 billion).

Characterized by high starting standards, small yet elite scales, a sharp research focus and an international outlook, these institutions have rapidly risen to rival China's most prestigious schools in admission scores. Their most distinctive feature is the dissolution of boundaries between industry, academia and research, which enables a reimagining of how knowledge is produced and talent is cultivated.

At these new universities, students enjoy the freedom to choose their majors, experience interdisciplinary learning by rotating through different laboratories and engage directly with society's most pressing challenges.

The rise of these innovative institutions reflects higher education's urgent adaptation to a new technological revolution. Their emergence forces us to ask some key questions: How can we free students from meaningless competition? How can we move beyond raising merely obedient high-achievers? And, most importantly, how can we nurture open, innovative thinkers with the resilience and courage not just to adapt to the future, but to lead it?

Dorms to DMs

China Youth Daily
September 12

As members of the post-2000 generation become the dominant cohort on college campuses, traditional social networks—dormitories, classes and clubs—are increasingly giving way to digital interactions. These students are often found studying alone in libraries or behind computer screens, greatly reducing face-to-face encounters. Social media “likes” and comments now replace casual greetings, while trending topics on micro-blogging platform Weibo and discussions on the popular Zhihu app serve as primary conversational material.

Largely raised as only children in smaller

families, many have long enjoyed intensive parental attention and were often shielded from social challenges outside the home. While they may socialize effortlessly in familiar settings, they can experience anxiety or reluctance in unfamiliar environments that demand active engagement.

The digital era, characterized by ubiquitous smartphones and tablets, allows them to fulfill social needs without the pressure of in-person encounters. Nonetheless, mutual respect and deep connections remain essential for linking individual identity to the wider society. As real-life contexts evolve, so must our ways of interacting. The goal of this adaptation should not be to isolate individuals but to find new ways to enrich their social lives.

↓ HONG KONG VOLUNTEER AWARDED FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE MEDAL

Walter Leung Wai-yin, a medical volunteer with the Hong Kong Red Cross (HKRC), received the Florence Nightingale Medal, one of the highest international distinctions for nursing professionals, at a ceremony in Beijing on September 12. Vice President Han Zheng, who is also honorary president of the Red Cross Society of China, presented the medal to the seven Chinese recipients this year.

Leung, 66, has over four decades of nursing experience. During his tenure in public hospitals, he focused on the Department of Acute and Rehabilitative Medicine and Geriatrics. In 2008, before retiring, Leung joined the HKRC as an overseas emergency health service volunteer. He has since devoted his clinical experience to global humanitarian missions. He has taken part in relief operations in many areas such as West Africa, Syria and the Gaza Strip.



“City walls carry powerful symbolism. They were once military structures, but today they embody public spirit and peace.”

Marco Trisciuglio, a professor at the Italian Polytechnic University of Turin, commenting on an ongoing China-Italy joint program to revive the ancient city wall in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province

“Design is not just a job. It’s what I love.”

Qiu Xin, a designer with hearing and speech disabilities at ESP China Inc., a guitar maker with an unusual workforce in Harbin, telling Xinhua News Agency in a recent written interview



COVER STORY

FOR GOOD AND FOR ALL

Advancing global AI governance through joint endeavors By Jiang Tianjiao



Robots on display at the exhibition area of the 2025 Global Industrial Internet Conference held in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, on September 6

Put simply, the inner workings of AI remain opaque. Another concern is “hallucination,” where AI produces false or misleading information. AI systems may invent fictional storylines, speculate about user preferences, or even fabricate references and sources, all with convincing detail. The misuse of AI is also a significant risk—for instance, the deployment of AI-enabled weapons in regional conflicts can trigger humanitarian crises, while criminals are exploiting deepfake technology to commit fraud, spread disinformation, and incite violence.

Another major challenge lies in the imbalance of AI capabilities, which has deepened the global digital divide. A handful of developed countries and leading corporations monopolize the core resources and technologies essential to AI and, driven by geopolitical and economic motives, often block technology transfer or impose discriminatory standards that deny developing countries fair opportunities. At the same time, developing countries suffer from inadequate infrastructure and limited technical capacity, leaving them heavily reliant on external technologies and trapped in a structural dilemma of starting behind and staying behind. The persistence and widening of this intelligence gap not only consigns the Global South to the bottom of global value chains but also erodes their voice in shaping AI agendas and standards. Worse still, it has fostered new forms of governance inequality, marked by algorithmic dependency and digital colonialism.

The third challenge is that global mechanisms for AI governance remain underdeveloped. While international organizations and platforms such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and ►►

As a fast-evolving and disruptive technology, AI is showing ever more clearly its nature as a double-edged sword. It offers vast opportunities for social and economic progress, but also carries significant uncertainty and complex risks. Addressing these uncertainties and risks, and ensuring AI develops

in an inclusive and responsible way, requires urgent global dialogue and cooperation.

Multi-faceted challenges

Global AI governance faces multiple challenges. Chief among them are the risks inherent in the technology itself. A prominent example is the “black box” problem: For a given input, an AI system generates results through complex algorithms and models, yet users are often unable to explain how those results are derived or to grasp the details of the underlying mechanisms.

Development, UNESCO, the Group of Seven (G7) and the Group of 20 (G20) have launched initiatives to build governance frameworks, these efforts remain fragmented—differing in implementation pathways, priorities, and participation mechanisms. Policies and standards vary sharply across jurisdictions; and no unified, binding framework has yet emerged. For instance, the United States is moving toward deregulation, whereas the European Union has established a rules-based system through hard law, leaving standards difficult to align. This lack of coherence hampers mutual recognition and the interoperability of governance rules, creating regulatory disorder and barriers to collective action.

Providing public good

Confronted with the complexities of global AI governance, China is taking an active lead, working to ensure that AI develops in an inclusive and beneficial direction.

China adheres to the core principle of “people-centered, AI for good” in advancing AI development and governance. In October 2023, President Xi Jinping proposed the Global AI Governance Initiative, emphasizing the need to balance development with security, foster dialogue and cooperation to build consensus; and establish an open, fair, and effective governance framework that enables AI to serve the wellbeing of humanity. In September 2024, China introduced the AI Capacity-Building Action Plan for Good and for All (ACBAPGA) at the United Nations High-Level Meeting on International Cooperation on Artificial Intelligence Capacity-Building, setting out five key principles: sovereign equality, orientation toward development, people-centeredness, inclusiveness and collaborative cooperation. In July 2025, China released

the Global AI Governance Action Plan, calling on all parties to uphold the goals and principles of promoting AI for good and for the people, pursuing development, ensuring safety and controllability, and advancing fairness and inclusiveness, while taking concrete and effective actions to jointly promote global AI development and governance. This August, China’s State Council issued the Opinions on Deepening the Implementation of the AI Plus Initiative, explicitly defining AI as an international public good for the benefit of humanity and calling for the creation of an open ecosystem for AI capacity-building that is equal, trustworthy, diverse and mutually beneficial. This series of initiatives proposed by China has increased international consensus on advancing AI for the common good, contributing Chinese wisdom and solutions to global AI governance.

As a responsible major country committed to advancing AI development in a people-centered and beneficial manner, China supports the United Nations in playing the central role in global AI governance. It actively promotes UN principles in both bilateral and multilateral settings and works to translate UN initiatives into concrete outcomes. In June 2024, with joint sponsorship or support from China, the United States and 120 other countries, the 78th UN General Assembly adopted its first-ever resolution on AI, calling for it to benefit all countries and regions, bridge the digital divide, advance digital transformation, and promote peace. In July 2024, the General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution put forward by China on strengthening international cooperation in AI capacity-building, which underscores that AI development should remain people-centered, oriented toward good, and dedicated to serving humanity. The resolution also reaffirms support for the UN’s central role in international cooperation to achieve inclusive, beneficial, and sustainable AI development. As a key promoter, China has fulfilled its responsibilities by introducing the ACBAPGA as a measure to enhance implementation of the UN General Assembly resolution on strengthening international cooperation in AI capacity-building. The plan is being advanced through North-South cooperation, South-South cooperation, and triangular cooperation. In addition, China co-hosted with the UN Secretariat the first AI Capacity-Building Workshop in Shanghai, which drew representatives from nearly 40 countries and achieved positive results.

Unlike the closed-source model dominated by U.S. giants such as OpenAI, China has adhered to the principle of openness and open source in the field

of AI. It has put forward the International AI Open-Source Cooperation Initiative, aimed at building an open-source ecosystem in partnership with other countries, with open source serving as the key driver. This reflects China’s commitment to promoting and leading an open, inclusive, and beneficial path of AI development. For example, DeepSeek-R1, with its open-source, low-cost and high-performance model, has provided a new paradigm and direction for global AI development. It has lowered the threshold for AI adoption, facilitated technology diffusion and advanced the democratization of innovation, thereby helping to bridge AI gaps between the Global North and South, as well as across regions. China has also actively shared technological achievements and best practices with its global partners, creating platforms for cooperation and organizing a wide range of exchanges to foster a multi-level and diversified ecosystem of collaboration. In healthcare, for instance, AI has been applied to intelligent medical imaging analysis, improving patient diagnosis and treatment experiences. In the energy sector, the Bright Power large model has been applied in Brazil to enhance the quality and efficiency of grid inspections and to strengthen power grid security.

AI cooperation in the Global South

China has consistently paid close attention to the development needs of Global South countries in AI and has taken measures to advance robust cooperation with them in this domain.

China has worked through platforms such as BRICS (a platform for cooperation between emerging-markets that initially comprised Brazil, Russia, India, China and South

Africa) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to establish and improve cooperation frameworks on AI. Within the BRICS framework, China promoted the release of a joint initiative to strengthen cooperation on AI application and development, thereby enhancing the voices and cooperation capacities of member states. The Rio de Janeiro Declaration stressed that global AI governance should focus on reducing risks, responding to the needs of all countries—including those of the Global South—building a UN-centered governance system, and promoting the responsible development and application of technologies in support of sustainable development. Within the SCO, China has promoted the adoption of the Tianjin Declaration, which supports greater cooperation among science parks and innovation clusters, and advanced the formulation of the SCO Outline on Future Technologies. It has also leveraged the potential of the Alem.AI International AI Center to establish mechanisms for AI cooperation. Moreover, China issued a plan for building the China-SCO AI Application Cooperation Center, inviting other SCO member states to jointly build a cooperation center for AI applications, to promote inclusive and widespread use of AI technologies.

China has deepened practical cooperation through initiatives such as the China-BRICS AI Center and capacity-building workshops. The center was established to pool resources, promote research and development, facilitate exchanges, and nurture talent, providing vital support for Global South countries. In 2024, China and Zambia jointly launched the Group of Friends on International Cooperation in AI Capacity-Building. Earlier this year, China and Brazil co-hosted the BRICS Future Network Innovation



A teacher works with a student in an AI interactive classroom at the Affiliated School of Luhe Middle School in Beijing on September 11

Forum, which set out the responsibilities of research groups on AI and related areas. China has also been an active participant in the UN capacity-building network, helping developing countries cultivate expertise in AI science and applications through workshops that range from foundational theory to hands-on practice.

China has advanced practical cooperation through joint efforts in computing power, algorithm sharing and governance consultation. On computing power, China has prioritized development and inclusiveness by supporting Global South countries in strengthening infrastructure and building application scenarios. For example, in May this year, Malaysia launched its National AI Infrastructure Strategy, creating a full-stack AI ecosystem based on Huawei's Ascend chips and the DeepSeek model. On algorithms, Chinese research institutions and enterprises have shared proven solutions to help Global South countries tackle real-world challenges. For instance, the AI visual hub system of Chinese company Vietadata integrates more than 50 algorithms with digital twin technologies to provide real-time monitoring and automated management of the Djibouti Free Trade Zone. On governance, China has called for Global South countries to take part in rule-making, respecting national contexts and development needs while working together to build a fair and effective global governance system. The Shanghai Declaration on Global AI Governance

advocates establishing a global governance mechanism, reinforcing the UN's central role, and enhancing the representation and voice of developing countries.

In global AI governance, China has set an example by steering technology toward the good, strengthening cooperation with the Global South, and contributing Chinese knowhow and solutions to building a community with a shared future for humanity. Looking ahead, China will continue to work with the international community to uphold openness and sharing, build platforms for cooperation, refine policy frameworks, promote technological collaboration and knowledge transfer, and lower barriers to innovation—jointly advancing AI development and ensuring it serves the common good. **BR**

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THE THREE PILLARS OF GLOBAL AI GOVERNANCE: SCIENCE, SAFETY AND INCLUSION

By Maxime Stauffer

Artificial intelligence is not a safe technology, nor is it an equal one. It holds immense promise, but it is also a dual-use tool with significant destabilizing potential. For this reason, I believe global cooperation for effective AI governance is an absolute necessity. The governance architecture we are building must rest on three foundations: science, safety and access.

First, we need a mechanism to track and assess the state of AI development. The United Nations recently agreed to establish an independent international scientific panel on AI—similar to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change—which will regularly report on technological trajectories and societal impacts. This will provide a shared basis for decision-making among governments, companies and civil society. Although still in its early stages, this represents a promising step toward establishing a global scientific consensus on AI.

Second, a global safety and verification regime is essential. AI poses not only dual-use concerns but also real risks of loss of control. Currently, there is no reliable system to ensure that AI developers adhere to safety protocols, nor are there mechanisms to monitor or verify compliance.

Third, benefit-sharing and capacity-building mechanisms are needed to address the distributive imbalances caused by AI. In the short term, we must develop ways to redistribute the

value created by AI, which would otherwise concentrate in the hands of a few. In the long term, developing countries require investments in digital infrastructure, energy systems and education to ensure they can deploy AI systems and participate meaningfully in the emerging global AI economy.

We are beginning to see these elements emerge—albeit slowly and unevenly. A milestone was reached last year when UN member states adopted the Global Digital Compact, which includes a dedicated section on AI. This section outlines three important steps: first, the creation of a scientific panel on AI, tasked with continuously updating the world on the technology's trajectory and consequences; second, the establishment of a global dialogue on AI governance to negotiate universal norms and coordinate capacity-building programs; and third, the exploration of a global AI fund to help finance infrastructure projects, especially in under-resourced regions.

This direction is crucial because most prior initiatives, such as the UK's AI Safety Summits, the Group of Seven's Hiroshima Process, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's AI work and the Global Partnership on AI, have been largely driven by the Global North and have failed to create a universal and equitable ecosystem. The UN-led efforts offer a more legitimate and representative path.

However, the current state of global governance is far from adequate. The UN system has published only about 2 percent of its outputs in science and technology, and most member states lack experience in advanced tech governance. While the Global Digital Compact provides a promising framework, the implementation mechanisms require further strengthening.

Several interlocking challenges must be addressed to make meaningful progress in global AI governance. First, AI is becoming a destabilizing force in geopolitics. I am not only referring to its potential use in nuclear command and control systems, but also to the way AI is unpredictably reshaping economic structures and global power balances. No one has experience managing this kind of

transformation. As uncertainty increases, so does the risk of miscalculation and misinterpretation. Countries may act on incorrect assumptions about others' intentions, raising the risk of escalation—trade wars, sanctions, or worse.

Second, dialogue is essential precisely when opinions differ. Increasingly, countries treat dialogue as something that occurs only when there is consensus. But this misunderstands its purpose: Dialogue is most critical when trust is low. We must relearn how to communicate even when we disagree. Thus far, discussions between major powers on AI have been challenging. Last year's China-U.S. talks in Geneva yielded limited results, but they should not be seen as a failure. Continued efforts are essential. Without them, effective governance is impossible.

Third, capacity-building remains a major challenge. It is emphasized in the Shanghai Declaration on Global AI Governance and UN resolutions, but the discussion lacks depth—particularly regarding how AI-related capacity-building differs from traditional infrastructure projects. Building Internet infrastructure is beneficial regardless of AI, but what is specific to AI is ensuring that developing countries are not permanently excluded from its benefits. We also lack serious cost assessments, making it difficult to mobilize private-sector support.

Open-source AI development adds another layer of complexity. Open-



Smart lawn-mowing equipment on display at the MOVA Zone of IFA Berlin, Germany, on September 5

source models can democratize AI development and broaden access to its benefits. However, open source is not an all-or-nothing proposition. Some models—especially those with potential for misuse in bioweapons or terrorism—should not be open. We need greater precision in determining what should and should not be public.

The situation is particularly concerning for the Global South. Three major risks stand out. First, international inequality: The gap between countries that can build advanced models and those that cannot will continue to grow. Second, domestic inequality: Even in countries like Egypt or Kenya that develop local AI systems, benefits are likely to flow to elites rather than the broader population. And third, geopolitical dependence: Most Global South countries will not develop

their own frontier models and must rely on technological systems from leading countries, which could diffuse potentially unsafe AI models and deepen technological dependence.

Looking ahead, one concrete step is to promote transparency. If governments shared more about their technical and strategic activities, we would have fewer misunderstandings.

We also need financial tools to support governance and inclusion. One option is to redefine Official Development Assistance (ODA). Currently, digital infrastructure and AI are excluded from most ODA frameworks, meaning institutions like the World Bank or Chinese development banks cannot fund AI-related projects. Expanding the definition of ODA to include digital technologies would unlock substantial investment.

Finally, it is important to maintain strong multilateral institutions like the UN and, in the short term, promote multi-stakeholder participation in governance. Geneva can play a key supporting role—not as a governmental actor, but as a venue. It hosts many trusted international organizations, and most countries are already represented there,

providing a relatively neutral platform for dialogue and an ideal environment for communication.

The path forward remains uncertain, with shifting political dynamics and competing interests creating numerous obstacles. Yet the foundations of global AI governance are being laid through the UN's scientific panel, new dialogue mechanisms and emerging financial frameworks. Progress may be slow and uneven, and may also occur through minilateral and bilateral pathways, but the alternative—abandoning international cooperation—is far worse. We cannot afford to relinquish the multilateral approach. **BR**

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BALANCING INNOVATION AND SECURITY

By Yao Xu

From economic competitiveness to national security, from social transformation to global governance, AI is reshaping the foundations of modern life. AI is not a distant possibility but the defining force of our time, which is a reality that governments, industries and societies worldwide can no longer ignore.

For China, the objective is to seize the opportunities of rapid technological progress while guarding against the risks of unchecked development. This dual commitment, balancing innovation with security—explains why Beijing has moved swiftly and strategically on AI governance. Internationally, China is proposing initiatives and engaging in rule-making. Domestically, it is refining regulations and standards while fostering industrial ecosystems. At the local level, it is experimenting with pilot programs to create exemplary models.

China's AI governance

China's progress in AI is vibrant. Industry, academia and research are increasingly intertwined, producing a surge of influential AI models. By early 2024, China had launched more than 100 large-scale models with over a billion parameters, accounting for more than one-third of global releases, second only to the United States. Behind those numbers lies a deeper story: An expanding network of more than 4,500 AI enterprises, a core industry approaching 600 billion yuan (approximately \$84 billion) in value, and a user

base of nearly 249 million for registered generative AI services.

The implications are significant. Not long ago, global discussions about AI were dominated by Silicon Valley. Today, however, models such as DeepSeek have demonstrated that China is not only catching up but in some areas setting the pace. For many countries outside the West, particularly in the Global South, this development is more than a technical milestone—it signals the emergence of alternative pathways and partnerships in AI, challenging the notion that advanced innovation is exclusive to a few developed economies.

Yet such growth also brings risks. The risks associated with AI, including bias, disinformation, privacy violations and even systemic threats to stability, are real. Recognizing this, China has taken the unusual step of advancing rules and standards in parallel with innovation.

Domestically, laws such as the Personal Information Protection Law and the Data Security Law create a baseline of accountability. The Interim Measures for the Management of Generative AI Services, which took effect on August 15, 2023, go further, placing red lines around algorithmic manipulation, deep synthesis, and unsafe training practices. These are not abstract regulations; they directly shape how AI companies operate, requiring attention to ethics, transparency and user safety. Complementing these legal safeguards, the National AI Industry Standardization System Construction Guide (2024) sets technical benchmarks in areas such as privacy computing and safety evaluation, combining enforceable laws with more flexible principles and guidelines.

Internationally, China has put forward systemic frameworks for AI governance. In October 2023, it introduced the Global AI Governance Initiative, and on July 1, 2024, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution titled Enhancing International Cooperation on Capacity-Building of Artificial Intelligence. The resolution, proposed by

China and co-sponsored by more than 140 countries, including the U.S., highlights the rights and needs of developing countries. By doing so, China has pushed the issue of narrowing the global “intelligence gap” to the forefront of international debate.

China's governance approach is not confined to national legislation or global forums. On the ground, Shanghai and other cities are actively experimenting with AI development and regulation. Shanghai, which has positioned AI as a pillar of its innovation strategy, has not only incubated leading companies and institutions but also broken new ground in governance. At the 2024 World Artificial Intelligence Conference held last July in Shanghai, the Shanghai Declaration on Global AI Governance was released, emphasizing safety, reliability, controllability and fairness. This provides insights that can be shared at both the national and international levels.

Overall plan and global cooperation

If innovation runs ahead of governance, risks could spiral out of control; if governance is improper, innovation could be stifled. Striking the right balance is a challenge. Here, China's approach of “two hands, both strong”—advancing development while safeguarding security—offers valuable lessons.

China's proposed answer is a



A type of robot that can be applied in various scenarios, including retail and industry, at the exhibition site of the 2025 World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai on July 29

full-cycle governance model. This means embedding security considerations from the earliest stages of research and design, applying differentiated regulatory oversight during deployment, and strengthening monitoring and emergency responses during operation. In practice, this would require not only new legal and technical tools but also adaptive regulatory mechanisms capable of keeping pace with fast-moving technologies.

Such an approach is not only about protecting Chinese society. It is about contributing a governance model to the world, one that other countries, particularly those still building their AI capacities, can study, adapt and benefit from.

AI governance is a global challenge that requires the joint participation of all nations. China has consistently emphasized a collective approach, given AI governance is an issue that demands shared solutions. Its engagement with the United Nations, its call to narrow the global intelligence gap and its partnerships

across the Global South all reflect a commitment to openness and cooperation. Through these efforts, China positions itself not only as an active participant but also as a leading force in shaping the international governance process.

With developed countries, China is seeking dialogue on AI-related risks and ethics, even in an environment complicated by geopolitical competition. Here, the goal is not to erase differences but to find common ground on issues such as transparency, accountability and responsible innovation.

With the Global South, the agenda is even more pressing. Many developing nations are eager to harness AI for development but lack the resources, expertise, or infrastructure. China's experience, along with its open-source models like DeepSeek and MiniMax, offers pathways for low-cost, accessible solutions. Training programs, joint research, and infrastructure support can help bridge divides and ensure that the benefits of AI are broadly shared rather than concentrated in a few wealthy nations.

By amplifying the voices of developing countries in rule-making, China seeks to promote the formulation of international rules that reflect the concerns of all parties. This approach not only strengthens the participation of Global South countries in the governance of artificial intelligence but also broadens the inclusiveness of the global governance process.

A moment of opportunity

The world cannot afford fragmented approaches that deepen divides or foster mistrust, nor can it tolerate a governance vacuum in which the fastest innovators dictate the rules by default. What is at stake is not only competitiveness but also the fundamental principles of fairness, inclusivity and shared security.

The path ahead will not be easy. Effective governance demands constant adaptation, humility in the face of complexity, and, above all, international cooperation. Yet, if pursued with vision and balance, it can unlock the full promise of AI while keeping its risks in check.

China's actions show that such a balance is possible. By committing to innovation without abandoning responsibility, advancing rules without stifling creativity, and linking national progress to global cooperation, China is presenting a roadmap at a critical moment for the world.

Good governance leads to good intelligence. The present moment—in which AI remains malleable and governance structures are still being shaped—is the best time to act. China's timely leap in AI governance is more than a domestic milestone; it represents a contribution to humanity's shared future. If embraced with openness and cooperation, it holds the potential to deliver greater welfare and brighter prospects for the world. **BR**

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ZERO-G, ZERO RULES: THE WILD WEST OF AI IN SPACE

By Xiao Junyong & Li Dinggen

At the Third Deep Space Exploration (Tiandu) International Conference in Hefei, Anhui province, on September 5, Wu Weiren, chief designer of China's lunar exploration program and a member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, revealed plans for the country to conduct a kinetic impact demonstration mission targeting an asteroid. The mission, which will follow a “fly-by, impact and follow-up fly-by” model, will use AI to help execute the operation.

This is a major step forward in space exploration—but it also opens up a new debate: What happens when AI starts making decisions in outer space?

AI promises to boost efficiency in space missions, but it also brings new

legal questions into focus: Who should be held responsible if something goes wrong? Who owns the data generated in space? And are the algorithms guiding spacecraft ethically sound? The era of spacefaring AI is here, but the rule-book is still stuck on Earth.

The risks

There are three main challenges. First is the technology itself. AI often functions like a “black box”—its decision-making process is hard to explain, and algorithmic bias or hardware failures may occur. As a result, a spacecraft could veer off course, collide or create space debris that affects multiple countries.

Second is legal responsibility. International space law is clear on

this matter: States are accountable for their activities in space, and humans must retain final control. But when AI systems act on their own, are they just tools, or more like agents? That grey area makes it hard to apply existing treaties, like the Outer Space Treaty, signed in 1967 and considered the “Magna Carta” of space law, to real-world incidents.

Third is fairness. Not every country has the same level of expertise in AI or access to space data. Those with advanced technology could dominate decision-making, leading to what some call “digital hegemony.” That would clash with the principle that outer space is the shared heritage of humanity. Smaller spacefaring nations worry that without clear mechanisms for equitable participation, the benefits of AI in space will be captured almost exclusively by a handful of powerful states and corporations.

International space law hasn't kept up with the times. Most of it is still built on the Outer Space Treaty—long before AI was even imagined as part of spaceflight.

For example, the Space Liability Convention—which was adopted in 1972 and offers a clear, international framework of rules and procedures for assigning financial liability when a space object causes damage, injury or loss of life—says, “A launching state shall be absolutely liable to pay compensation for damage caused by its space object on the surface of the Earth or to aircraft in flight.” But what if the damage results from an AI system's autonomous decision, not a direct government order? In that case, victims might struggle to find anyone who bears legal accountability.

On top of that, today's legal framework says nothing about the intellectual property of AI models, algorithm transparency, data sharing or ethical standards in space. Many of these questions exist in a legal vacuum.

Without new agreements or updated treaties, states risk drifting into a future where accidents, disputes and even intentional misuse of AI in space occur without a clear basis for resolution. Building consensus will require balancing innovation with accountability, ensuring that AI serves as a tool for collective progress rather than a source of mistrust and division in outer space.



Wu Weiren, chief designer of China's lunar exploration program, who was elected as the International Deep Space Exploration Association's first chairman, speaks during the association's inauguration ceremony in Hefei, Anhui Province, on July 7



A science fiction-themed planetary science experience exhibition at the China Architecture Science and Technology Museum in Wuhan, Hubei Province, on July 18

A new framework

To meet these challenges, the world needs to act quickly and establish a set of coordinated rules—on both the domestic and international levels.

At the national level, China could take the lead by piloting legislation, such as regulations specifically governing the use of AI in space activities. Such rules should clearly define AI as a “tool” under space law, ensure smooth alignment with existing treaties and create a system where designers, operators and states share responsibility.

High-risk AI systems in space should also meet strict standards: Algorithms must be explainable, decisions traceable and humans able to intervene at any moment. This would not only help enforce national oversight but also uphold commitments under the Outer Space Treaty.

At the international level, a two-step approach may be needed. In the short term, bodies such as the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space could issue ethical guidelines for AI in space, outlining basic principles for its use. In the long term, a binding international treaty could be pursued—one that establishes clear liability rules, compensation standards, data-sharing

mechanisms and even a global registry of space AI activities to boost transparency and predictability.

Dispute resolution will also be key. Existing institutions such as the International Court of Justice or the Permanent Court of Arbitration could be expanded to handle AI-related space cases, supported by a panel of space law experts, AI engineers and ethicists. This body could gradually build standards for evidence and causality in cases where AI systems cause damage.

Beyond law, ethics must also guide the use of AI in outer space. Four principles stand out: No matter how advanced AI becomes, humans must be able to step in, overrule or take charge; AI-driven space benefits should be shared, not monopolized—through cooperation on data, modeling and talent training; given the fragility of the space environment, any AI-led

activity, from debris removal to asteroid redirection, must be undertaken with extreme care; AI decisions must be traceable and auditable—so that if something goes wrong, accountability can be established.

AI is transforming how humanity reaches for the stars. But without strong laws, fair international rules, effective dispute mechanisms and firm ethical guardrails, the risks could outweigh the rewards. By taking the initiative now, China can both safeguard its own interests and help shape a more just, inclusive and sustainable system of space governance. Only through law and cooperation can humanity truly—and safely—journey into deep space. **BR**

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THE GLOBAL SOUTH IN GLOBAL AI GOVERNANCE

By Gabriel Merino

The United States, Europe and China have all made progress in important aspects of AI governance: The EU has put into force its Artificial Intelligence Act, the U.S. administration has issued executive orders on AI, and China, too, has established its own AI laws and regulations. These advances were made according to each actor's own criteria and governance models.

For its part, it is important to highlight the Shanghai Declaration on Global AI Governance, produced on July 4, 2024, within the framework of the World AI Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance. The Shanghai Declaration and the recent United Nations resolution on AI capacity-building are very important because they express the concerns of developing countries and aim to reduce the gap between the Global South and the Global North.

**It is necessary for the
Global South to have
greater influence in the
development of criteria
and standards for global
AI governance**

I believe there are three critical issues in global AI governance: Geopolitical fragmentation and lack of cooperation are detrimental to true democratic global governance; the gap between countries that are developing their own AI governance and those that are not can be a problem for national sovereignty and can lead to the exclusion of a large part of the world's countries from the development of fundamental governance rules; the monopoly of AI by large private corporations and their decisive role in determining the rules of the game can generate undemocratic ecosystems and favor large monopolistic capital over workers in the current technological revolution, concentrating profits in the hands of a few.

Additionally, the main challenges for the Global South in terms of global AI governance include developing its own capabilities to actively participate in the ongoing technological revolution and break the center-periphery dynamic, increasing levels of cooperation to build governance criteria and principles from the Global South, and unifying the Global South in a common policy to have greater weight in global definitions.

The outlook for global AI governance is not very encouraging—at least not in the immediate future. Global fragmentation is likely to continue, and it is also likely that the interests of the geopolitical West in dominating AI as a strategic technology of the current industrial revolution in order to impose its hegemony will lead to greater dispute with emerging poles, to the detriment of global cooperation. Furthermore, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the United States' desire to maintain hegemony in the Western Hemisphere at all costs is creating resistance against autonomous developments in this area and against cooperation with other emerging or developing countries.

In the process of building global AI governance, it is essential that the perspectives of developing countries are strengthened in this process, with the aim of not widening the technological gap,

exacerbating the center-periphery dynamic and excluding the majority of humanity from the construction of the principles and norms of governance of a key technology in the present and in the future.

The United Nations, as a democratic global forum representing all countries in the development of common criteria for global AI governance, could play a key role in combating geopolitical fragmentation and building a form of governance that takes into account the interests of developing countries. It is also key to producing legislation in line with the majority interests of the world's population, aimed at the common good.

It is essential to deepen cooperation in research, development and innovation and the joint development of this key technology for the present and future of humanity, especially Global South countries. On that basis, it is necessary for the Global South to have greater influence in the development of criteria and standards for global AI governance. Key issues in this regard include data management, protection of national sovereignty, reduction of the technological divide, improvement of the population's wellbeing, distribution of benefits and control of large private monopolies. **BR**

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THROUGH THEIR EYES

People from around
the world take you
on a journey to
rediscover China



The GGI Serves Humanity (Including Americans)

By Joseph Gregory Mahoney

As China moves forward with the introduction of the Global Governance Initiative (GGI) it is encountering criticism from Washington that it aims to change the international system merely to suit itself. This raises the question of whether China should be labeled a “revisionist state” or whether it’s pursuing a more inclusive and equitable global order, one that upholds the spirit and principles of key institutions in the existing global governance system, including the United Nations. The GGI focuses on the direction, principles and pathways for reforming the global governance system.

China has offered repeatedly to work hand in hand with other states to reform the elements of the global governance system that have failed to live up to the world’s needs and expectations. It has done so in response to a situation in which accelerating changes and challenges are intersecting, risking tipping points and cascade effects. These include climate change, the global pandemic, paradigm shifting technologies and the ascent of the Global South.

Revisionist v.s. reformist

While Western scholars have debated for more than two decades whether China is a revisionist state, from the official U.S. point of view, including strategic security and defense doctrines, China has been labeled “revisionist” since 2017. Generally, a revisionist state is defined as one that seeks to change or end the current international system, and stands in opposition to a “status quo state,” i.e., one that wants the existing system to remain the same.

On the one hand, let’s acknowledge straightaway that “revisionist” is usually understood to be a pejorative term in two senses. First, those seeking to change the system, to disrupt global order, are generally considered to be “revisionist troublemakers” who often spark tensions and even world wars, with scholars pointing to

Nazi Germany and the country’s prior period under Kaiser Wilhelm II from 1888 to 1918, as textbook examples. To be sure, it would be immoral to defend German aggressions in either of these examples, and yet, we must ask: Do we also want to defend the status quo of the imperialist global order within which Berlin then competed, with Germany seeking to secure and advance its own sovereignty and security by trying establishing its own hegemony? Second, separately, among Marxists, “revisionist” is also a negative term, used to describe a fundamental alteration if not betrayal of one’s core values and commitments, sharply distinct from reform-driven theoretical and practical adaptations designed to address the inevitable changes or differences in material conditions.

On the other hand, scholars also have debated whether such a dichotomy—first developed in the wake of the Treaty of Versailles and later popularized as the Cold War heated up in the 1950s—is still valid or whether it always exemplified lazy and self-serving theorization. One might argue that it’s true the U.S. is undermining and abandoning the global governance system—which is absolutely revisionist behavior—and does so to perpetuate what it imagines to be the status quo of its hegemony. Meanwhile, while China remains committed to multilateralism and promotes global governance reform rather than replacement, it also opposes the “status quo” of U.S. hegemony and unilateralism. Does that

mean that both states are partly revisionist, and partly status quo? Or does it mean that Chinese efforts like the GGI are opposed to both revisionism and the status quo?

Let’s state the obvious straightaway: The U.S. is a double-revisionist state. It’s not only abandoning and violating the international system it helped create but also betraying the fundamental theory and values it long claimed were vital for global peace and development. Furthermore, although the U.S. is trying to sustain its hegemony, one can’t reasonably argue it is a status quo state. This is because U.S. hegemony has already eroded to such a point that its position as the status quo power has already been lost. Consequently, while the U.S. tries to behave in unilateral and unipolar ways, while it’s trying to recover the power it once held, we already live in a multilateral and multipolar world.

Furthermore, it should be noted that this is not the first time that we have lived in such a world. Indeed, the international governance system was founded in the multipolar conditions prevailing after World War II. Thus, multilateralism was designed as the handmaiden of multipolarity and the desire to minimize potential conflict. From this historical vantage point, we can note that the U.S. rising as the world’s sole superpower in the 1990s, then declaring a new world order and fashioning itself as the world’s policeman, embarking on decades of illegal invasions, regime changes and military occupations, and doing so while sometimes deceiving, sometimes strong-arming, and sometimes ignoring the UN, was completely out of step with the post-war global governance system that aimed from the beginning to prevent precisely these kinds of destructive excesses.

China, a reformist state

Let’s also be clear: China is a reformist state. It’s neither revisionist in either meaning of the word nor foolishly embracing the status quo. In



The seventh China-Arab States Expo kicks off in Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, on August 28. The expo attracted more than 7,600 participants and over 2,200 enterprises and institutions from 75 countries and regions

short, China is not betraying the principles of the international system but aims to strengthen them, as the GGI makes clear. Furthermore, because we're living in a period of accelerating changes, because contradictions around the world are overdetermined, in this era more so than others, none can expect to survive very long by sticking with the status quo. More to the point, China rejects the status quo for two reasons: First, the status quo is always impossible to sustain; second, what passes at the status quo today is existentially perilous.

For example, China rejects the status quo of proxy wars between fossil fuel-dependent economies fighting over energy markets and how energy is paid for, above all because such struggles are trying to recover and reinforce old paradigms of hegemony and do so to the detriment of global ecology. China rejects the status quo of the U.S. building military alliances and proliferating weapons of mass destruction anywhere in the world, but most especially in Asia. China rejects U.S. policies like vaccine diplomacy or abandoning the global public health system. China rejects the status quo of the U.S. meddling in China's internal affairs or the affairs of others. China rejects the status quo of the U.S. exercising abusive fiscal and monetary policies and externalizing those costs globally through gross domestic financial mismanagement and failed governance. China rejects the status quo of America's ability to manipulate the global financial system and pursue antagonistic policies like a global trade

war. And by the way, all of the pillars of the existing global governance system, including the UN, the World Trade Organization, the World Health Organization and the Paris Agreement, were likewise formed to oppose these kinds of bad behavior.

On the other hand, a status quo state is one that likely enjoys systemic privileges, typically at others' expense, and often does so asserting the "end-of-history" narrative. In a global governance system that is supposed to be equitable, systemic privileges are either abuses or temporary aberrations, and all the more so because we know the "end-of-history" thesis is metaphysical nonsense. We know history never stops, and those who pretend it do get left behind, fuming and blaming others for their own failures.

Interestingly, among social scientists, those who are devoted to the status quo are frequently prone to irrationalism, a type of cognitive bias, one literally called "status quo bias." One might argue Washington is thusly afflicted, not simply because conservative ideologues are especially prone to such problems, as research also reveals. Rather, it's because

ongoing U.S. attempts to bring the world to heel are merely accelerating American declines—fall-offs that have been observed for the past quarter century at least.

Furthermore, no expert worth their salt believes such policies will return the U.S. to former glories or contribute meaningfully to a shared future for humanity. But to again note the obvious, this irrationalism is found precisely in the revisionist tactics the U.S. now pursues to sustain a status quo that's already past—a status quo that was always predicated on a zero-sum game with others, but is playing a zero-sum game with itself, unable to accept the reality of a new, multipolar world, deploying its armed forces domestically in a dark dance with itself, reeling from the whipsaw effects of herky-jerky polarization and trying to export the same abroad.

The GGI—espousing the purely positive principles of sovereign equality, abiding by international rule of law, multilateralism, the people-centered approach, and taking real actions—is not formed in opposition to the existing international system or even the U.S. itself. While the GGI is reformist, it's neither revisionist nor committed quixotically to an unsustainable status quo. Rather, it's dedicated to strengthening the architecture of global governance to serve the interests of all nations, including the U.S. It aims to rejuvenate the global governance system, again by recapturing and reinforcing the very principles and spirit that led to its creation in the first place. With such clarity and dedication, Beijing understands this is the only way for humanity to move forward together, and no amount of shock, denial, anger or bargaining will change this simple fact. **BR**

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A UN Perspective on China's Path to Eco-protection



September 7 was the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies. **Siddharth Chatterjee**, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in China, spoke with *Beijing Review* reporter Li Nan on the sidelines of an event organized by the United Nations Environment Programme China Office to celebrate the day in Beijing on September 4. Edited excerpts from the interview follow:

Beijing Review: What are your comments on China's environmental protection achievements?

Siddharth Chatterjee: I think on all counts China must be commended for what it has done in dealing with nature. Look at Beijing, not just too long ago, about 20 to 25 years ago, it was one of the most polluted cities in the world leading to all forms of major human health challenges. Decades of determined efforts by the government, by communities and other stakeholders, have shown that cleaner air is within reach, as highlighted in the UN report and a review of 20 years of air pollution control in Beijing. And today its skies are clear with high air quality.

And there are three reasons for this change. First, there was strong political will to make this change happen. Without political will that change does not happen. So I want to commend the leadership all the way from the top down to the municipal level for having taken this challenge as one that they could change.

The second is how the government comes out with the right public policies to enable this sort of change to take place. So great public policies were put in place.

And finally, it forged the right partnership—the partnership with society, partnership with the private sector, partnership with state-owned enterprises, partnership with the very companies that are polluting the place. It all came together to look at a common cause for a better environment for everybody. So Beijing stands out as a great model of success. Its journey offers valuable lessons for cities and

countries everywhere seeking to clean up their skies.

Now when I look across China, let's take the example of the Kubuqi Desert in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in north China. It used to send most of the sandstorms into Beijing. Today, that entire desert ecosystem has been turned into an agricultural wonderland and a renewable energy source which includes

photovoltaic cells and windmills. Again, it is a result of a convergence of the right political will, right public policies and right partnerships.

All this is a collective demonstration that to deal with the triple planetary crisis of biodiversity loss, climate change and air pollution, it needs concerted action. It needs the convergence of public-private partnerships. It needs political will. But, above all, what it needs is a desire for change that China on all counts has demonstrated.



The Qianmen area of Beijing under blue skies on May 31, 2024

What are your expectations for China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) in this area?

Ecological governance is a very important issue President Xi Jinping has talked about. It is about harmony with social progress, harmony with people's development and harmony with nature. We need to bring all of it together. Without that, we will see the planet being robbed of its resources, the planet being completely exploited. And that is what we are seeing all over the world. That is why the race against fossil fuels and to embark on this journey for more renewable energy, more electric vehicles is so important.

Today, if you go out onto the streets of Beijing, or many parts of China, many vehicles are electric—as a result of which air pollution has improved exponentially.

Therefore, the concept of an ecological civilization should be applied throughout the world. It is very much ingrained in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. But, above all, I believe the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework is an excellent example of what is politically possible of bringing convergence around this issue. (The framework, adopted at the UN Biodiversity Conference in December 2022, aims to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030—*Ed.*)

In fact, I would say the Kunming Declaration is like the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change. It is a very important step forward. I would encourage all countries across the world to embrace the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as a call to action to deal with biodiversity loss.

We must come together to deal with the challenges of climate change and air pollution. As China transits from the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) to the 15th Five-Year Plan, it is an excellent model for how we can emphasize ecological civilization and how it can advance human development.

This year observes the 80th anniversary of the founding of the UN. How do you see China's role in this world body?

The 80th anniversary is a very important



Crops growing beneath photovoltaic panels at an agricultural base in the Kubuqi Desert, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, on September 4

milestone. It coincides with many important events that are already happening in China. UN Secretary General António Guterres has stated that the UN80 Initiative provides the UN with an opportunity to completely reform itself, which is what it is trying to do.

(“In March 2025, Guterres launched the UN80 Initiative to transform how the UN works—identifying efficiencies, reviewing how mandates are implemented and examining potential structural changes and program realignment within the UN system,” the official UN website reads—*Ed.*)

I appreciate the strong support of China as a member state to advance and accelerate the UN80 Initiative. The UN80 Initiative is a beacon of hope. It also demonstrates that we've been able to avoid wars. We've been able to provide food and immunization under some of the most difficult circumstances, but the time has

come for the UN to also change along with its membership.

The UN80 Initiative is an important opportunity to do just that here, in China. We are already planning various events, including with the Shanghai Institute of International Studies, to look at the UN80 Initiative, look at the UN reforms, as well as advance our cooperation toward a big celebration on UN Day (October 24), where we expect to bring together over 150 ambassadors, bring together universities, senior officials from the Chinese Government, to mark this milestone.

As Guterres said when he took over as UN secretary general in 2017, “The world isn't at peace. We need world peace.” Today, we need world peace more than ever, with so many ongoing conflicts across the world. We are having a climate crisis. We had a pandemic that exposed the fragility of human health and the world's health system. It's a great opportunity for the world to unite behind the UN Sustainable Development Goals to advance humanity. **BR**

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Investing in the Growth Story

On the sidelines of the 25th China International Fair for Investment and Trade (CIFIT), held from September 8 to 11 in Xiamen, Fujian Province, **Harley Seyedin**, Chairman and President of American Chamber of Commerce in South China (AmCham South China), shared his insights in an exclusive interview *Beijing Review* reporter Zhang Shasha on opportunities for global investment in China, the evolving China-U.S. relationship and the importance of cooperation for world peace and growth. Edited excerpts from their conversation follow:

Beijing Review: How do you assess the role of CIFIT as a platform for international investment and cooperation? And how would you evaluate the city of Xiamen as its host?

Harley Seyedin: I know the CIFIT very well, and I've watched its growth alongside China's growth—especially in Fujian Province and the city of Xiamen.

Xiamen is known as the “Paris of the Orient,” but I think it's even better. It's a beautiful, ancient city, home to the very first foreign consulate in China, which has been preserved wonderfully.

The CIFIT is a very important part of the growth of China. We've been bringing delegations of different sizes to the fair for more than 20 years. The fair represents two types of opportunities: investment into China and investment into other countries. Over the past 20 years, our delegations have averaged more than \$2 billion annually in new contracts signed at the CIFIT.

Could you share your experience and connection with China and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA)? What does the GBA represent for foreign enterprises, and what role does the AmCham South China play?

I've lived and worked in China for more than 30 years and raised a family here.

In 1991, I put a team together and came to Guangzhou (capital of Guangdong Province in south China and a city in the GBA—*Ed.*). I saw the industrial revolution happening in China. As a result, I made some very good investments—every one of them turned out to be profitable, beyond what I had ever expected. That's why Guangzhou became home.

My first project investment was building a power plant in Dongguan (another GBA city in Guangdong—*Ed.*), which helped the city develop rapidly. I also built another in

Guangzhou. I was very lucky to have those opportunities, and they made me feel like I was truly part of the growth and part of the change.

The GBA brings together Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions and nine cities in Guangdong—each with unique capabilities that collectively create a region unlike anywhere else in the world. It will play a decisive role in shaping the future growth of China, not just the region itself.

At AmCham South China, we represent about 2,300 members, accounting for 40 percent of all U.S.-China business trade and investment. We work directly with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C. We are fortunate to have the GBA as part of our area of coverage, as our member companies have a strong interest in investing in the GBA.

What are your views on the current state of global investment and the role China is playing in that field?

China plays a great role in global investment. The Belt and Road Initiative is an area that China has highlighted and fully supported, providing many countries with the ability to build ports, airports, railways and highways, and this is going to continue. (This China-proposed initiative boosts connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes—*Ed.*)

The need is there. Many Asia-

Pacific countries in particular require roads, ports and other facilities. When a new port is built in one of these Southeast Asian countries, trade between that country and China naturally increases.

The reality is that China has risen as a global powerhouse in manufacturing, exports and investment. Many Chinese companies are investing overseas and going multinational, and I believe this trend will continue. I also believe the U.S. welcomes the opportunity for Chinese companies to invest there as well.

What does the Chinese market represent for U.S. companies today? Has its significance for them changed?

China continues to be a very significant market for American companies. According to the latest study released by AmCham South China, more than 72 percent of our members are primarily operating in China—importing goods and services from the U.S. and producing goods and services locally for the Chinese market. Fewer than 28 percent remain focused on exports. This shows that China has become a market where we have transitioned from simply relying on low-cost manufacturing for export to developing higher-technology and higher-value-added products for domestic consumption.

Chinese market has been very important to us. It's going to continue to be important and it will represent a very significant market for our companies going forward.

Given the cultural differences between China and the U.S. in terms of consumption and savings habits, what recommendations would you offer for China's efforts to expand its domestic demand? How might U.S. companies contribute in this context?

U.S. companies began arriving here some 30 years ago, bringing with them advanced



Visitors engage in conversation at the China International Fair for Investment and Trade in Xiamen, Fujian Province, on September 8

technology and high-quality products. Trust and confidence in American products is very high in China.

That is why I constantly encourage American companies to sell their products here. China remains an exponentially growing market—perhaps not as fast as we would like at this moment, but current challenges, driven by the COVID-19 pandemic and international factors, are temporary in nature. With time and negotiation, these difficulties will pass. I firmly believe China will continue to be an ever-expanding market for American products. We are not leaving; in fact, we want to expand our market share here.

As income levels rise, Chinese consumers will spend more. Chinese people are very smart consumers. They know what products they like and they spend within their means. They will continue to spend. Today, it is slower, which can be explained by broader economic conditions, particularly the softness in the real estate market. And I believe that as the broader economy strengthens, with COVID and its impacts behind us, China will continue to buy more products. The Chinese will spend money when it is necessary, and they love to spend on luxury goods. I think that is something that will naturally continue to grow.

I recognize that there are differences between the U.S. and China in trade and other areas. Dialogue is what creates understanding, agreements and opportunities. I think the fact that

China is demonstrating such openness to maintain dialogue and work through differences is remarkable and commendable. This is exactly what we need to continue doing. I'm very pleased to see that high-level talks are taking place.

How should China and the U.S. respond to current challenges in order to promote better global economic governance, and what role can businesses play?

If you look at the last 70-plus years of peace, technology in the world has advanced far more than it had in the previous 3,000 years. This boom has allowed every country in the world to raise the quality of life for its people.

When we look at China over the last more than 40 years, it has lifted some 800 million people above the poverty line, an achievement that has never happened before in human history. All of this has been possible because of peace.

As a result of peace, countries began to work together. Globalization became an important factor in this process, contributing to the wellbeing of people. China is now the second largest economy in the world, making

it a naturally important part of the global economy. China has not only improved the lives of its own citizens but has also helped raise the standard of living in many other countries.

As long as peace continues, I expect our technology will keep advancing.

Business is an integral part of political and international relations. The U.S. and China already work very well together. There are differences and occasional arguments—but every relationship, even marriage, has disagreements from time to time. Currently, trade between China and the U.S. is robust, and cooperation in many areas is strong and growing. Negotiations are ongoing not to reduce collaboration but to expand it—to open new doors, explore new frontiers and create new possibilities for both countries.

I expect that both countries will continue to work together for the betterment of humanity for many years to come. The U.S. and Chinese economies are deeply intertwined and inseparable; in many ways, they depend on each other. I expect that this will continue to grow.

Many Global South countries are seeking greater infrastructure and development support. Do you see potential for China-U.S. cooperation in third-party markets?

The reality is that after World War II, the U.S. played a key role in enhancing the World Bank and other multilateral institutions that support investment in many countries. These institutions continue to contribute to global growth.

China has entered this arena through the China Development Bank and the Belt and Road Initiative. I believe there is ample opportunity for collaboration. With these investments, there are many possibilities for co-investing in infrastructure across different regions. This is something the two countries should continue to discuss and actively pursue. I simply cannot see any one country doing this alone in the future. **BR**

Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
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The Erosion of Trust

By Einar Tangen

The fundamental compact between a government and its citizens hinges on a foundational promise: The state will ensure the safety and security of its people. Citizens entrust their freedoms and resources to the government in exchange for this essential protection. However, in the United States, this fundamental obligation has been broken, forcing a fearful population, who might otherwise be opposed to gun control, to buy them for their personal and family safety.

While the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right to bear arms, it was written at a time when the 13 Colonies had just achieved independence and were surrounded by threats domestically and internationally. Civilian militias were essential in the American reality of that time, both for personal and national security.

Times change, and the America of today does not need armed militias. However, the U.S. Supreme Court interpretation of the law in the District of Columbia v. Heller case, handed down in a 5-4 decision on June 26, 2008, ruled that the Second Amendment guarantees an individual right to possess firearms independent of service in a state militia and to use firearms for traditionally lawful purposes, including self-defense within the home. That is an unfortunate ruling that severely curtailed the government's ability to control guns and the tragedies they cause.

The sheer frequency of gun-related deaths is mirrored by the unwillingness of politicians to take this crisis on, further eroding confidence in the political system.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2023, over 47,000 people died of gun-related injuries in the United States. This figure includes suicides, homicides and unintentional shootings.

The relentless violence breeds distrust in the government's ability to protect its people. This sentiment is often amplified by politicians on both sides of the gun debate.

Those advocating for stricter gun control highlight the tragic statistics as evidence of the government's failure to adequately regulate firearms, arguing that this inaction leaves citizens vulnerable. They call for legislative changes, emphasizing the need for universal background checks, bans on assault weapons and red flag laws to reduce the prevalence of gun violence, but their efforts are often more about appealing to their base rather than developing innovative solutions.

Conversely, politicians who champion Second Amendment rights frame the issue along constitutional and personal responsibility lines. They argue that the focus should be on mental health, law enforcement and the enforcement of existing laws, rather than restricting the rights of law-abiding citizens to own firearms for self-defense. They emphasize the importance of individual responsibility and the right to protect oneself in a society where, they argue, the government cannot guarantee safety. This perspective often resonates with those who feel the government is overreaching or ineffective in its protective duties.

Ultimately, the responsibility for ensuring a safe society rests squarely with the government. While individual responsibility plays a role in any community, the primary duty to prevent violence and guarantee public safety lies with the state. When the government appears to relinquish this fundamental obligation, either through inaction or by implicitly



A mother hugs her child after a mass shooting at a school in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on August 27. The gunman and two children died, and another 17 were injured in the shooting

suggesting individuals must arm themselves for their protection, it fundamentally undermines its contract with its people.

Addressing the pervasive gun violence crisis and fostering a genuine sense of collective security demands a renewed commitment from the U.S. Government to fulfill its core responsibility: to actively protect its citizens and cultivate a society where the fear of violence is not a constant presence. To do this will require a willingness on both sides of the political divide to confront the entrenched issues surrounding gun ownership, implement meaningful policy reforms and prioritize the safety and wellbeing of all its populace.

The political will to bridge the divide and find effective solutions, rather than simply using the issue for political gain, is crucial to restoring trust and ensuring the government fulfills its fundamental duty. **BR**

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Gun Violence: America's Repeated Tragedy

By Zhong Mei

The White House lowered its flag to half-staff on September 10 after a shooting claimed the life of Charlie Kirk, a 31-year-old conservative activist who was fatally shot while speaking at an outdoor debate at Utah Valley University in Orem, Utah, the U.S., earlier that day.

For many, the lowering of the flag, now a kind of shorthand for national grief, felt like a ritual repeated far too often as a result of firearm deaths, which have long been a fixture of American life.

Following Kirk's death, four mass shootings happened in the U.S. within four days. As of September 15, there had been 305 mass shootings in the country this year alone, according to the Gun Violence Archive, a nonprofit group established in 2013 to track gun-related violence. A mass shooting is one that has injured or killed four or more people,

not including the shooter.

Easy access to guns, undoubtedly, is the key reason for the alarming firearm death rate in the U.S. The Switzerland-based Small Arms Survey estimated that, in 2018, there were about 390 million firearms in circulation in the U.S. That translated to roughly 120 guns for every 100 residents, a ratio that dwarfs every other country on the planet.

The Second Amendment was made to the U.S. Constitution in response to concerns from individual states that it might grant Congress the power to disarm their state militias, threatening their sovereignty. Ratified on December 15, 1791, the amendment reads: "A well

regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." The purpose of the amendment being stated at its beginning, it is clear to most that the Second Amendment was not meant to guarantee the right to own and carry a gun outside of participation in those state militias. And yet debate, often politically motivated, continues more than 200 years, and millions of deaths, later.

Most Americans oppose unfettered access to weapons. According to a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2024, 58 percent of U.S. adults favor stricter gun laws. Another 26 percent say U.S. gun laws are about right, while 15 percent favor less strict gun laws.

Lobbying is one of the key forms of resistance to a change in gun policy, with the National Rifle Association (NRA) the best known among pro-gun organizations. Figures collected in July from the Lobbying Disclosure Act records show that in the second quarter of this year alone, the NRA spent \$380,000 pushing the pro-gun agenda, third behind the National Shooting Sports Foundation at \$1.78 million and Gun Owners of America at \$679,015.

The question of gun legislation remains deeply divisive, with opinions breaking sharply along party lines. A survey conducted by Gallup, a global consultancy, last year found that 89 percent of Democrats favored stricter gun laws, compared with only 25 percent of Republicans. Among the public, the debate is often framed as one of liberty versus safety. However, until public opinion swings more decisively in favor of greater controls, the pressure on legislators remains firmly against action. **BR**



A U.S. flag flies at half-staff at the White House in Washington, D.C., on September 10, to mourn Charlie Kirk, a political ally of U.S. President Donald Trump, who was shot dead by a sniper at Utah Valley University in Orem, Utah, earlier that day

Comments to linan@qicgamerica.com

Probe Into U.S. Practices Aims for Fairness

By Lan Xinzhen

On September 13, China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) announced it had launched an anti-discrimination investigation into U.S. measures targeting China's integrated circuit (IC) sector. In recent years, the United States has implemented a series of prohibitions and restrictions against China's IC sector, including export control measures. These protectionist practices are suspected of discriminating against China and constitute the suppression of China's hi-tech industries such as advanced computing chips and AI.

These actions not only undermine China's development interests but also seriously disrupt the stability of the global semiconductor industrial and supply chains. China firmly opposes such practices. The investigation was launched in accordance with Articles 7, 16 and 37 of China's Foreign Trade Law, and China may take corresponding measures against the U.S. based on the investigation's findings, said a MOFCOM spokesperson in a press release.

According to the MOFCOM announcement, the investigation will examine additional tariffs that have been or will be imposed on Chinese products, including ICs, based on U.S. Section 301 investigations since 2018. The investigation will also cover U.S. actions taken since 2022 to restrict exports of IC-related products and manufacturing equipment to China and limit the participation of U.S. persons in China's semiconductor projects.

The probe will look into how the U.S. CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 and related rules are used to restrict companies and individuals from conducting economic, trade and investment activities in related fields in China. In addition, it will cover U.S. government announcements and guidance from May that restrict the use of China's advanced computing ICs, such as Huawei's Ascend chips, and limit U.S. AI chips being used to train Chinese AI models.



The investigation is scheduled to last for three months and may be extended under special circumstances.

China and the U.S. held trade talks in Spain on September 14-17, with topics including U.S. unilateral tariff measures, U.S. abuse of export controls and TikTok. The international community expected the talks to yield positive outcomes. Just before the talks, however, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced on September 12 the addition of multiple Chinese entities

to its export control "entity list." This move had a negative impact on the China-U.S. trade talks and exposed Washington's continued intention to curb China's development. China's initiation of an anti-discrimination investigation into measures taken by the U.S. against China in the IC sector can be regarded as a reciprocal countermeasure against the unreasonable move made by the U.S.

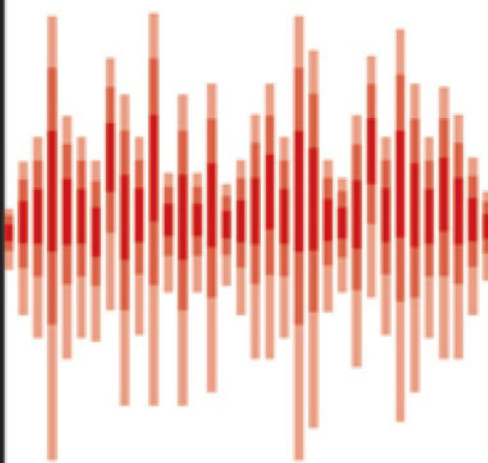
Since the U.S. launched its trade war against China in 2018, it has continuously intensified its measures to contain China's development. The U.S. measures, involving technology blockades and market restrictions, have created unfair competition for China's IC industry and constituted serious discrimination against China in technology trade, undermining China's national interests. China had previously hoped to resolve these issues through communication and negotiation. But now China's initiation of an anti-discrimination investigation reflects its disappointment with the U.S. China has no choice but to conduct an anti-discrimination probe to assess the impact of the measures taken by the U.S. on its national interests and adopt response measures based on the results.

The measures taken by the U.S. against China's IC sector have violated World Trade Organization rules. Therefore, China's initiation of an anti-discrimination probe is also to uphold the authority and effectiveness of international trade rules. Through the probe, China aims to oppose U.S. trade discrimination practices and warn against gaining competitive advantages through unfair means, thereby maintaining the fairness of international trade. This move reflects China's consistent stance on international trade, which is to uphold multilateralism, pursue mutually beneficial cooperation and oppose bullying. **BR**

**Through the probe,
China aims to oppose
U.S. trade
discrimination
practices and warn
against gaining
competitive
advantages through
unfair means**

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Code of Cooperation: Innovation

China and ASEAN step into the next phase of shared development By Zhang Shasha

In steelmaking, what once relied on the seasoned eye of a master is now handled by smart systems that read flame color and brightness to guide inputs with precision. In sugarcane fields, robots take care of planting, spraying and harvesting while spotting weeds to cut pesticide use. A legal large model can translate laws from all 10 member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and a fruit-focused large model offers features such as evaluating when durians are ripe, helping more ASEAN produce reach the Chinese market.

These advances were among the highlights of the AI for All: China-ASEAN—also known as the AI Super League, a competition for cutting-edge technologies transforming everyday industries. Since its launch in July in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, the event has attracted more than 3,300 teams, including 329 from ASEAN countries.

As the curtain-raiser for the 22nd China-ASEAN Expo (CAEXPO) and the China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit, which kicked off in Nanning on September 17, the event lit up

the stage with an innovation buzz.

Themed Digital Intelligence and Innovation Empower Development—Leveraging China-ASEAN FTA 3.0 New Opportunities for an Even Closer China-ASEAN Community With a Shared Future, this year's CAEXPO for the first time set up a 10,000-square-meter pavilion dedicated to AI, underscoring the ever-expanding cooperation between China and ASEAN nations.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Chinese Vice President Han Zheng said China stands ready to work with ASEAN countries to embrace the new wave of scientific and industrial transformation, unlocking the potential of cooperation in frontier areas, including AI, as well as in the digital and green economies.

ASEAN Secretary General Kao Kim Hourn said that after more than two decades of development, the CAEXPO has become more than a showcase for trade and investment. As a platform shaping the future of ASEAN-China cooperation, it now serves as a driver of integration, innovation and long-term growth.

New opportunities

This year's AI spotlight arrived amid the upcoming upgrade of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (CAFTA) to version 3.0. On May 20, the two sides concluded related negotiations, adding nine new chapters covering areas such as the digital economy, green economy, customs procedures and trade facilitation.

This upgrade demonstrates broader and deeper regional economic integration, with supply and industrial chains set to become more closely intertwined, paving the way for further growth in trade between China and ASEAN, Li Daokui, Director of the Academic Center for Chinese Economic Practice and Thinking at Tsinghua University, said on his personal social media account.

According to the General Administration of Customs of China, trade between China and ASEAN grew from 870 billion yuan (\$105 billion) in 2004 to nearly 7 trillion yuan (\$984 billion) in 2024. China has remained ASEAN's largest trading partner for 16 consecutive years, while ASEAN has been China's top trading partner for five years in a row. Their cumulative bilateral investment had exceeded \$450 billion as of this July.

Kao revealed that the CAFTA 3.0 is expected to be signed this October, which sends a strong signal to the world—even amid rising geopolitical tensions and global uncertainties, China and ASEAN remain firmly committed to upholding a rules-based trading system.

"The CAFTA 3.0 is a vital contribution to defending a free and open world economic system," Sang Baichuan, Dean of the Institute of International Economy at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, told *Beijing Review*. "It upholds the principles of free trade and free investment, even as some economies move in the opposite direction."

Sang said the two sides are highly complementary in terms of industrial structure. Over the years, they have developed tight supply chain linkages that have already yielded tangible results. The CAFTA 3.0 is designed to strengthen

China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (FTA): From 1.0 to 3.0

FTA 1.0: Launched in 2010, with negotiations starting in 2002—the first FTA for both China and ASEAN.

- Zero tariffs were applied to over 90 percent of products.

FTA 2.0: Upgraded in 2015 and fully implemented in 2019.

- Expanded to services and investment, opening sectors such as finance, telecom and tourism, and covered modern topics like e-commerce and economic-technical cooperation.

FTA 3.0: Negotiations ran from 2022 to May 2025, with signing planned in October.

- Nine chapters added, including the digital economy, green economy and supply chain connectivity, promoting deeper regional economic integration.



Visitors experience an AI-powered face-changing device at the 22nd China-ASEAN Expo in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on September 17

the growth and resilience of China-ASEAN supply chains through institutional improvements.

He added that the newly added chapters reflect the direction of future economic transformation. Strengthening institutional frameworks in these areas will help ensure their economic cooperation keeps pace with technological change and aligns with the global drive toward sustainable development.

“Deepening economic and trade cooperation between China and ASEAN has injected a sense of certainty into China’s export and global trade,” Li said.

Southeast Asia is home to nearly 700 million people and has a remarkably young population. Strong consumption intentions, coupled with consumption’s contribution of around 60 percent to GDP, make the region highly attractive.

While purchasing power is still lower than in Western countries, the ongoing transfer of global supply chains is gradually increasing wealth in the region, giving rise to a growing middle class and presenting vast business opportunities, Li explained.

“ASEAN also offers China an avenue to advance industrial upgrading,” he said. Taking Chinese tech giant Huawei’s 5G technology as an example, while globally leading, it has faced resistance from the United States and several of its Western allies. China’s rising popularity in Southeast Asia allows its high-value products to gain traction there. Similarly, China’s high-speed rail technology and its homegrown C919 passenger aircraft have entered local markets.

ASEAN, with its huge population and integrated markets with China, represents a major growth opportunity for the next two decades, according to Li.

Han said China will work with ASEAN to make the CAFTA 3.0 a success, continue the high-quality implementation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, a free trade pact comprising the 10 ASEAN member states and their five major trading partners—China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia and New Zealand—and the world’s largest free trade deal to date, better link up their markets, and enhance the hard connectivity of infrastructure and soft connectivity of rules. China will continue to expand import of competitive specialty products from ASEAN countries.

A shared future

In 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed building a closer China-ASEAN community with a shared future and the initiative of the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road during his state visit to Indonesia.

The China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), consisting of the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, aims to boost connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes.

Over the years, China and ASEAN enjoy growing connectivity, deepening economic integration, robust business ties and closer people-to-people exchange.

The China-ASEAN relationship has grown into the most successful and vibrant model for cooperation in the Asia-Pacific and an exemplary effort in building a community with a shared future for humanity, Xi said while addressing the opening ceremony of the 17th CAEXPO and China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit in 2020.

At the opening ceremony, Han said China will take the fifth anniversary of the China-ASEAN comprehensive strategic partnership in 2026 as an opportunity to work with ASEAN to better align development strategies and enhance policy communication, carry out high-quality BRI cooperation, as well as jointly implement the Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Global Security Initiative (GSI), the Global Civilizations Initiative (GCI) and the Global Governance Initiative (GGI).

The GDI focuses on promoting international development cooperation. The GSI focuses on resolving international disputes through dialogue and consultation. The GCI aims to promote the exchange and mutual learning of civilizations. The GGI focuses on the direction, principles and pathways for reforming the global governance system.

In their remarks at the opening ceremony, leaders from ASEAN countries commended the role of the CAEXPO, stating that in today’s complex international landscape, its focus on digital intelligence and innovation carries particular importance. They were confident that this year’s expo further strengthened the enduring friendship and trust between ASEAN and China, while promoting inclusive and sustainable growth. **BR**

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Service Trade, Transformed

Fair highlights how technology is reshaping global trade in services

By Yuan Yuan

On September 10, David Ingram, a tourist from Australia, purchased a souvenir at the China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) in Beijing and received an instant refund of the value-added tax in yuan. During this year's CIFTIS, which took place in the Chinese capital on September 10-14, multiple merchants offered "buy-and-refund" services for tax-free goods.

"I really like Chinese cultural and creative products but, in the past, I could only process tax refunds at the airport, which was quite inconvenient," Ingram said. "Now, I can complete the refund before going to the airport, which feels very convenient and greatly enhances my travel experience in China."

Additionally, international visitors have found it is easier to travel to and in China. During border inspection, travelers can achieve swift clearance via facial recognition and passport verification. After entry, they can apply for a super SIM card that integrates functions including calls, Internet access, subway rides and electronic payments, aiming to fully address the travel and payment needs of

inbound tourists. The card can be easily obtained at designated outlets of China Unicom, a major state-owned telecommunications operator, at the airport or in the city.

These services are just a glimpse of the diverse offerings of this year's CIFTIS. As a service trade fair rooted in Beijing, the event has been held annually since its inception in 2012. "It has now grown into the world's largest comprehensive trade in services fair, strongly testifying to the opening up, innovation and vigorous development of China's service industry and trade," said Vice Minister of Commerce Sheng Qiuping.

Tech turnaround

The 2025 CIFTIS was held at Beijing's Shougang Park. The site had been home to a major steel mill before its relocation out of Beijing ahead of the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics. Some facilities were later renovated and served as venues for several events of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics.

Themed Embracing Intelligent Technology, Empowering Trade in Services, the service trade fair attracted nearly 2,000 onsite exhibitors from 85 countries and international organizations. Australia, this year's guest country of honor, brought nearly 60 institutions and enterprises to the fair, with an exhibition area of 360 square meters—the largest ever for a CIFTIS guest country of honor.

The event featured 14 exhibition halls, nine thematic exhibitions and multiple forums and supporting events. One highlight was the empowerment of the service sector through technology, as the rapid development of cutting-edge

technologies such as AI and humanoid robots has injected new vitality into the service industry and became a major attraction for visitors.

Robotics technology drew considerable attention at the exhibition, where humanoid robots demonstrated both



Labubu dolls on display at the booth of Chinese toy producer Pop Mart at the China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) in Beijing on September 13



A senior visitor shakes hands with a humanoid robot at the CIFTIS in Beijing on September 13

advanced skills and practical applications.

“Since mass production began in June, our company has produced over 300 humanoid robots within three months,” Han Shenren, chief financial officer of Songyan Power (Beijing) Technology Co. Ltd., a Beijing-based company, told Xinhua News Agency. “Current orders are mainly for scientific research and education, exhibitions and cultural tourism guides, with orders for scientific research and education accounting for over 50 percent. Demand in cultural tourism and exhibition display is continuously growing.”

In terms of application scenarios, several domestic humanoid robots have been trained in environments such as logistics enterprises and automotive production lines. Some are already being piloted in industrial manufacturing, retail delivery and food and beverage services, indicating a clear acceleration in commercial adoption.

Ke Zhendong, Vice President of Leju Robot (Shenzhen) Co. Ltd., pointed out that, compared to traditional industrial robots, humanoid robots offer greater versatility, making them more adaptable to the rapidly evolving demands of industries such as automotive and electronics. They can flexibly handle complex production environments involving multiple items and processes. “The market potential for humanoid robots is enormous,” he added.

More than 100 companies launched over 190 new products and other achievements during this year’s event, including the world’s first 3D-printed polymer, fatigue-resistant, absorbable vascular stent and China’s first professional photonic quantum computer surpassing the 1,000-qubit scale, demonstrating the transition from smaller, experimental devices to larger, more powerful systems.

In the healthcare section, a thematic exhibition featured a wide array of technologically advanced and commercially important products, many of which made their global or Chinese debut. For instance, Tongren Ophthalmology introduced AI-powered glasses capable of conducting a full-body health assessment through a single retinal scan, instantly generating detailed reports.

Siemens Healthineers, together with Varian Medical Systems—a *Fortune* 500 company—unveiled the world’s first photon-counting CT scanner, which provides exceptionally precise, hair-thin vascular imaging, thereby reducing the need for invasive diagnostic procedures.

The cultural cadence

In the cultural and tourism services section, immersive experiences and culturally inspired creative products have over the years become standard attractions. At Beijing Municipal Cultural Heritage Bureau’s booth, an AI-generated digital assistant designed to help visitors quickly generate personalized itineraries attracted much media attention.

“The AI tour guide project was launched last year and has become fully operational as of this year,” a staff member told newspaper *Beijing Daily*. “Users can customize the avatar’s appearance, choose between the adult or child versions, and select their language and converse with it. Based on your availability—whether it’s 30 minutes, one hour or two hours—it designs tailored exhibition routes and exploration plans.” This digital guide service has been rolled out nationwide.

Alongside these tech-driven services, Chinese toy manufacturers showcased some of their most sought-after collections as well as new releases during the CIFTIS. Leading blind box brand Letsvan made its debut at the event with popular intellectual properties (IPs), including panda plush sensation Wakuku, as well as the emotionally resonant Siinono. Meanwhile, Pop Mart, a major player in the toy-producing scene, drew large crowds with a dessert stall selling biscuits shaped like its beloved characters Labubu and Dimoo.

Museum-inspired creative products have also become a hallmark of cultural consumption. A recent example is the magnet replica of the Phoenix Crown from the National Museum of China, modeled after historical artifacts.

“The CIFTIS is incredibly expansive—here you can see both cutting-edge technological products and cultural items rich in traditional Chinese elements,” a visitor said. “I hope to see more products and services in the future that blend these two aspects.” **BR**

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Centuries in the Making

China-LAC dialogue deepens at Wuxi forum

By Li Wenhan

Despite the geographic distance between China and the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region, relations between the two sides date back centuries. As early as the 16th century, Nao de China, or Ships of China, shuttled across the Pacific, marking the dawn of their interaction and exchange. From the 1960s onward, as China established diplomatic ties with multiple LAC countries, exchange and cooperation intensified.

“China and LAC countries are advancing hand in hand as a community with a shared future. This community of ours is founded upon equality, powered by mutual benefit and win-win, invigorated by openness and inclusiveness, and dedicated to the people’s wellbeing,” Chinese President Xi Jinping said at the opening ceremony of the fourth ministerial meeting of the China-CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) Forum on May 13. “It exhibits enduring vitality and holds immense promise,” he added.

On September 12, the annual Dialogue Between the Civilizations of China and the LAC, established as part of efforts to promote increased exchange between both sides, took place in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province in east China.

More than 150 participants—including diplomats from nearly 20 countries and representatives from international organizations, research institutes, media outlets and business circles—discussed a wide range of topics including people-to-people exchange, as well as China-LAC cooperation in business and green development.

Deepening ties

The event was co-hosted by the Jiangsu Provincial People’s Government Foreign Affairs Office, the Institute of Latin American Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), and the Academy of Contemporary China and World Studies (ACCWS), a subsidiary of China International Communications Group (CICG).

The dialogue has been included in the action plan of the Global Civilizations Dialogue Ministerial Conference, and its eighth edition this year, themed Promoting Development Toward a Shared Future Through Mutual Learning Between Civilizations, was an important platform for implementing the outcomes of the fourth ministerial meeting of the China-CELAC Forum.

CICG Vice President Xie Gang said at the opening ceremony that cultural exchange between China and the LAC region has a long history. He called for win-win cooperation, more dialogue on green development and stronger cultural ties.

He further noted that Chinese modernization brings numerous opportunities for China-LAC relations amid a slowing global economic recovery and a widening North-South development gap.

Since the inaugural ministerial meeting of the China-CELAC Forum in 2015, China’s ties with LAC countries have made further strides and the country has established or resumed diplomatic relations with several nations, including Panama, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras. On the economic front, more than 20 LAC countries have joined the Belt and Road Initiative, a China-proposed initiative to increase connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes, boosting cooperation in trade, infrastructure and investment. This growing partnership has translated into tangible outcomes: In 2024, China-LAC trade reached a record \$518 billion, more than double the \$257 billion registered in 2013.

“China and LAC countries are both members of the Global South and share a people-centered vision, committed to promoting development while improving people’s livelihoods. It is precisely this deep civilizational affinity that has enabled China and LAC countries to overcome geographical distance and come together,” Tang Lingyun, Deputy Director General of the Chinese Foreign Ministry’s Department of LAC Affairs, addressed the gathering.

Ambassador of Guyana to China Anyin Choo described world civilization as a “mosaic” enriched by both LAC and Chinese traditions. She highlighted cooperation between Guyana and Jiangsu in public health as a model of meaningful exchange, and encouraged all sides to listen, share and collaborate in building a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Jiangsu maintains meaningful ties with LAC countries, Fang Wei, Vice Governor of Jiangsu, said at the opening ceremony, adding that the province will work to make the dialogue a stronger platform for engagement and partnership between the two sides.

The opening ceremony saw the official launch of the China Jiangsu-Latin America University Consortium and the 2025 LAC Day. Also released was a book titled *China-Latin America Green Development Cooperation: Opportunities and Challenges*, jointly produced by Beijing-based Blossom Press, the CASS Institute of Latin American Studies and the ACCWS. The publication is a collection of research papers and case studies by Chinese and LAC scholars on collaboration between both sides in sustainable development and clean energy.



Participants pose for a group photo at the Eighth Dialogue Between the Civilizations of China and Latin America and the Caribbean in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, on September 12

Cultural exchange takes center stage

At the dialogue's sub-forums, participants held in-depth discussions on the roles of cultural exchange and innovation in building bridges for civilizational exchange and how to leverage ecological civilization and sustainable development to promote a climate-resilient future together.

Speakers from both sides emphasized that the future of the relationship lies not only in trade or diplomacy, but in cultural exchange and mutual understanding.

"People-to-people exchange is not a one-way output, but a two-way process of mutual learning," Wang Ning, Deputy Secretary of the Communist Party of China Committee of the CICG Center for the Americas, said.

Wang highlighted innovative approaches to cultural exchange, such as using virtual reality to allow people in LAC countries to experience China's Dunhuang murals, reconstructing Peru's Inca ruins online through 3D scanning, and facilitating collaboration between Chinese and LAC youth to create short videos that blend folk music, street dance and local cuisine.

"By harnessing digital platforms and new technologies, these cultural exchange programs transcend both language and generational divides, creating real connection between China and the LAC's Gen Z," he said.

Claudia Marcela Clavijo Pinzón, Chair of the National Gender Equality Commission of Colombia's Green Alliance Party, also stressed that real connection goes beyond mere statistics.

She urged both sides to think deeply about the meaning of the engagement between two great civilizations. "The answer doesn't just lie only in economic figures, but also in the human bonds we can build," she said. For her, the bridges between

peoples are formed from culture, education, art and solidarity. "We should put human values above instant interests," she added.

"From the beginning, what has guided us is respect and empathy—not the imposition of views, but mutual learning," José Adán Castelar Lopez, Executive Editor in Chief of Honduran newspaper *Poder Popular*, said, referring to the establishment of diplomatic relations between Honduras and China in 2023. He described current ties as "a smooth and an open road toward lasting friendship."

"The essence of people-to-people exchange lies in listening to each other's stories, caring about people, families and traditions. Before we assume any roles or titles, we are first and foremost individuals who long to be understood and are willing to understand others," he said.

Across the panel, a common theme emerged: Culture and innovation are not sidenotes but the driving force of China-Latin America relations. As Wang put it, "When civilizations interact, they find common ground while embracing differences." **BR**

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The Stories That Bind

Golden Panda Awards weave global tapestry of culture, empathy and dialogue

By Tao Zihui

For Paola Cortellesi, the director of Italian film *There's Still Tomorrow* that clinched Best Picture at the Second Golden Panda Awards, the recognition is a powerful reminder: “Cinema has the power to connect us beyond borders, languages and cultures.”

The film, which dominated Italy's box office in 2023, tells the story of Delia, a working-class housewife suffering from domestic violence in post-war Italy during the 1940s. Her awakening begins after gaining the right to vote in the 1946 Italian institutional referendum.

This work about an Italian woman's plight 78 years ago earned a high score of 9.4/10 on Douban, a major Chinese review platform. It has resonated deeply with Chinese audiences. One review reads: “Escape is good, but change is better. After today, there's still tomorrow.”

At the Second Golden Panda Awards, held in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, on September 12-13, 27 awards—25 across four categories in film, TV drama, animation and documentary, as well as two Special Jury awards—were granted.

They were chosen from 5,343 entries from 126 countries and regions—3,910 of them from overseas, accounting for 73.2 percent of the total.

This edition of the awards adopted a small jury, similar to those of the three major film festivals in Europe, which was chaired by China's renowned director Chen Kaige. The judges, all seasoned experts from different cultural backgrounds, ensured that the Golden Panda Awards emphasized artistic innovation and humanistic expression.

Huang Jianxin, chair of the film jury, reflected, “The ups and downs of recent years have made one thing clear to me—the subtlety of cinema lies not only in recording the times, but also in connecting hearts.” Given this year celebrates the 130th anniversary of world cinema and the 120th of Chinese cinema, these words resonated deeply with the attending audience.

Through the lens

The list of this year's Golden Panda Award winners



Members of the documentary jury take to the stage at the Second Golden Panda Awards in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, on September 13

paints a brilliant picture of the world's civilizations.

In the animation category, *Nezha: Demon Child Conquers the Sea*, or *Nezha 2*, took home the statue—unsurprisingly so. The sequel to the original smash hit *Nezha: Birth of the Demon Child*, with a cumulative box office of \$2.18 billion and 324 million viewers, became China's highest-grossing and most-watched animated film. From scene design to character modeling and detail, the film brims with elements and symbols of traditional Chinese culture, tightly intertwining protagonist Nezha's growth with the spirit of the times, showcasing resilience and courage in adversity.

Yet more touching is the cultural dialogue behind it. American visual effects master Douglas Hans Smith told *Beijing Review* that *Nezha 2* “dived deeper into the character, with a storyline both moving and warm. Despite the action, at its core, it is about family.”

What impressed him more was *Chang An*, which won Best Visual Effects. It is a historical animated film set against the backdrop of ancient China's Tang Dynasty (618-907). “It was my first real glimpse of the Tang Dynasty in film,” Smith said. “The portrayal of famous poets and the seamless blend of artistic creation and historical narrative left a deep impression.” Though he admitted that understanding culturally rich Chinese works “requires knowledge of Mandarin to grasp their essence,” he was still deeply moved by their artistic charm.

Cai Zhijun, chair of the animation jury, unveiled the secret of Chinese animation: “With the simplest symbols and most sincere emotions, animation awakens shared human memories,” he said. “Today, Chinese animators are engaging in global dialogue with a unique aesthetic language—not a one-way

expression, but mutual communication.”

Best Actress was awarded to Brazilian actor Denise Weinberg for her role in *The Blue Trail*. She portrays Teresa, a 77-year-old woman of the future. Centered on an elderly woman, the film showcases—through Weinberg’s vivid and powerful performance—not only the charm of a great actor but also the moving vitality of older female characters.

Best Director in the film category went to Tibetan filmmaker Pema Tseden for *Snow Leopard*, his eighth Tibetan-language work—and his last. Pema Tseden died of illness in 2023. Perhaps Pema Tseden was never destined to be a commercially successful director, but this award reminded people: These creations and creators remain an indispensable part of Chinese cinema.

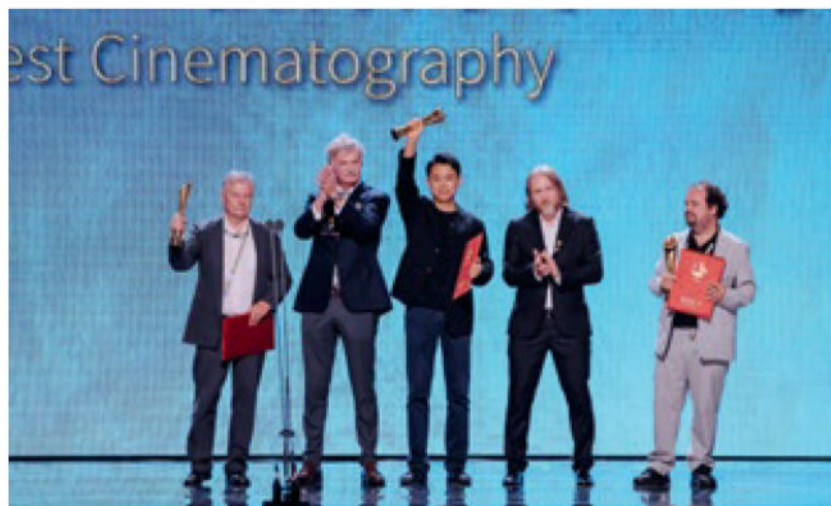
In the documentary category, Gao Song from China won Best Director for *My Hometown Across the Ocean*. This documentary on cultural exchange tells the story of foreign young people who, over 100 years ago, came from across the oceans to Sichuan, China, overcoming difficulties to spread knowledge through medicine and education. The film traces historical changes from 1892 to the present, highlighting the importance of cultural exchange.

In the TV drama category, *She and Her Girls* won both Best Series and Best Screenplay. The 23-episode realistic drama centers on Chinese teacher Zhang Guimei’s real-life founding of the Huaping High School for girls in China’s Yunnan Province. Through the portrayal of Zhang and the ensemble cast, it depicts mountain women breaking through fate’s constraints to pursue educational dreams.

She and Her Girls also moved American Oscar-winning visual effect artist Joel Hynek, “I saw many excellent and inspiring series at the Golden Panda Awards, like [the 2024 hit drama series] *Blossoms Shanghai*. *She and Her Girls* particularly impressed me—it was powerful. I’ve seen many great works here,” he told *Beijing Review*.

Harmony without uniformity

Using film and television as a vehicle, the Golden Panda Awards break down barriers of region, culture and language, offering a platform for the world’s civilizations to meet as equals. Here, there is no center or periphery—only colorful, equal and inclusive coexistence.



Gao Song wins Best Director in the documentary category for *My Hometown Across the Ocean* at the Second Golden Panda Awards

British television producer Mal Young said the awards brought him to China for the first time, an “eye-opening” experience. “It’s a culture shock in the very best way,” he said. Young praised Chengdu’s energy and the warmth of its people. In his view, emotional connection is the most important thing for different cultures to understand each other.

“No matter if we all speak a different language, we live in different countries and different cultures, we all can laugh, cry, be scared of things, be interested in things,” he told *Beijing Review*. “I think emotional connection is the common theme throughout the world. There are things people want to see, reflections of our true lives.”

Visual effects artist Hynek echoed this: “Visual effects help tell a story, and any good story can cross cultural and national boundaries.” His philosophy dovetails with the Golden Panda Awards’ mission to promote cultural exchange through film, with the panda standing as a symbol of our shared humanity. He stressed that breaking cultural barriers requires “a better understanding of other cultures, which can only be achieved by people coming together”—which explains why a notable number of this year’s jurors came from outside China.

Dutch director Pieter-Rim de Kroon observed an intriguing shift: “If you looked back 10 years, you would see real differences between Eastern and Western cultures and filmmaking. But over the years, we’ve learned a lot from each other. Today, you can see that film style in China has really developed.”

Drawing on the wisdom of the ancient Chinese sage Confucius, former Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou emphasized that true harmony arises from respect for differences, not uniformity. He stressed that in an age of rapid advances in AI, biotechnology and nuclear energy, empathy and cooperation are more essential than ever to building a just and prosperous future for all.

Chen called for breaking cognitive barriers. “Only when we open ourselves to other cultures, lives and values can the flow of civilization truly begin,” he said.

Swiss actor and director Vincent Perez, drawing from his own multicultural background, added, “True collaboration begins when we sit together and listen.”

This is the real meaning of the Golden Panda. **BR**

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Bend It Like Beijing

The Teqball World Series Beijing 2025, held in mid-September, attracted 72 teams from 14 countries. Teqball is an emerging sport that blends the technical elements of soccer and table tennis. The game is played on a curved table, similar to those used for table tennis, and players may strike the ball with any part of the body except arms and hands. This sport was born in Hungary in 2014 and is played in more than 60 countries around the world today. The Budapest-based International Teqball Federation organizes Teqball World Championships and Teqball World Series. **BR**

(Text and photos by Wei Yao)

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1. Thai players in red and players from Poland and Romania in blue battle on the field in front of the National Stadium in Beijing, also known as the Bird's Nest, on September 14

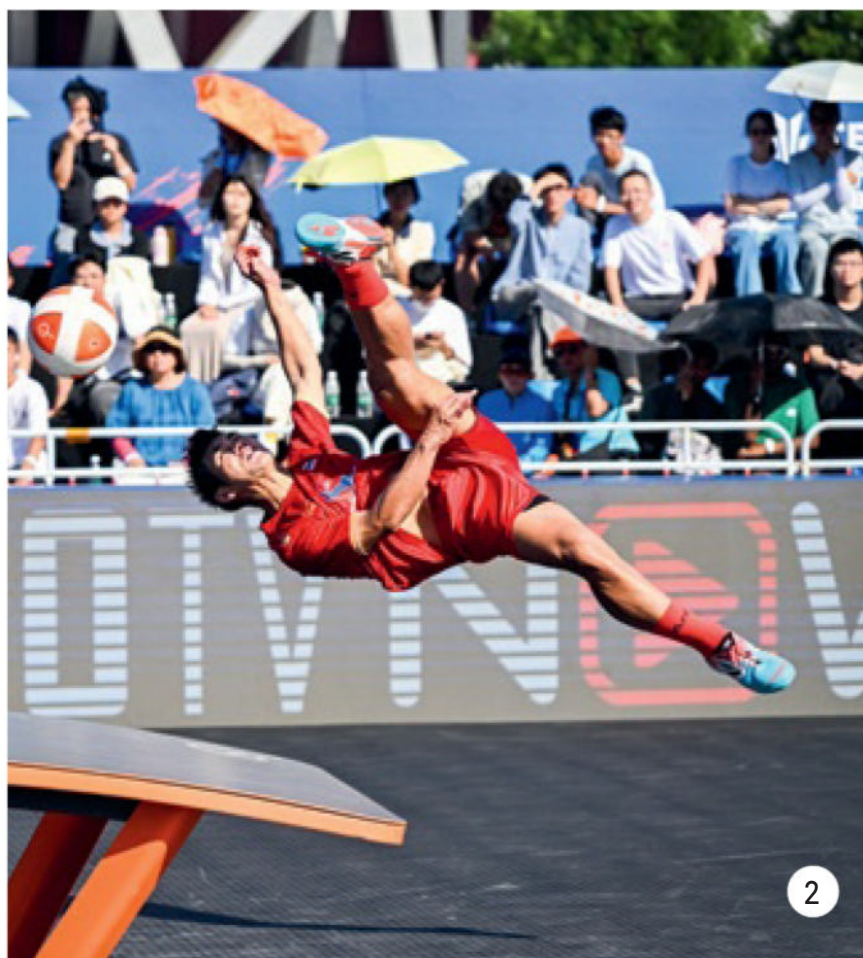
2. A player serves in the men's doubles final

3. Two referees discuss a men's doubles match

4. Mixed doubles champions from Thailand pose with the runners-up from Poland and Romania

5. Athletes and a coach from the Iraqi team congratulate a silver medalist from Poland (right)





The Meal, the Menu and the Message: Inside the Pre-Made Food Fight



On September 10, entrepreneur and influencer Luo Yonghao said in a post on popular micro-blogging platform Weibo that nearly all dishes at Xibei, a renowned restaurant chain serving northwest Chinese cuisine, are pre-made. Xibei first denied the claim, but later issued a public apology, promising to do its best to shift central kitchen processes back to on-site preparation.

The extensive public engagement in this debate reflects consumers' growing concern about the expansion of the pre-made meal industry. The dispute between Luo and Xibei resonated widely precisely because it highlights a key point of confusion among consumers: how to distinguish pre-made dishes, and how to avoid being misled by pre-made items presented as freshly cooked food—all while trying to maintain a healthy diet.

Ding Jing (News.cn): Consumers doubt the safety, nutrition and value of pre-made meals—a distrust rooted in longstanding information opacity, vast differences in standards and uneven regulatory enforcement. Pre-made dishes

were once hailed as a way to standardize Chinese cuisine, boost efficiency and cut costs. Yet what consumers really resist is never innovative business or service models; it is the deprivation of choice and the dismissal of the right to be fully informed. Today, many food producers conceal the use of pre-made items, but label them as freshly prepared, which only further erodes consumer trust in pre-made food.

An official document released by related authorities, including the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR), stipulates that preservatives are not allowed to be added to pre-made meals, but due to differences in local standards and regulatory strength in different regions, a lack of rigid restrictions on the use of additives in pre-prepped meals remains.

According to the SAMR, dishes produced in a central kitchen rather than in a factory are not classified as pre-made meals. Nevertheless, people tend to conflate anything that is not made on the spot with pre-made food. Restaurants and hotels should therefore promote the

clear labeling of pre-made dishes, ensuring that consumers can unmistakably identify whether the food they are eating is a pre-made meal.

Only when transparency replaces fraud, standardization drives away chaos and the emphasis on quality prevails over cost calculations can pre-made meals truly remove people's doubts and become a safe, convenient option in modern dining.

Editorial (Yicai.com): The pre-made meal industry is a thriving sector. At the current stage, problems like inconsistent standards and ambiguous perception of what constitutes a pre-made meal are hindering its growth. The state, however, has voiced its support to this industry in a key official document.

Internationally, pre-made dishes have grabbed a big share of the food and restaurant industry. In 2024, the U.S. pre-made meal market reached \$47.56 billion, making it the world's second largest. Currently, China holds the largest market size in the pre-made meal industry. Although China's industry started later than the relatively mature overseas markets, it has expanded rapidly. By late 2025, the market is projected to exceed 800 billion yuan (\$112 billion).

As the pre-made meal industry moves forward, problems continue to pop up. This in turn leads to public uncertainty, at times controversy even, which is normal. However, any practices that involve ambiguous information, sub-standard products, consumer deception or food safety concerns are unacceptable. Likewise, exploiting trending topics to create hype and demonize the pre-made food sector is equally unacceptable. **BR**



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